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PREFACE

This number of the Bulletin closely follows the principle mentioned in the previous issue, viz. to devote greater attention to Tamiḻ Traditions and Tamiḻ Culture and, at the same time, emphasise the bonds of the traditional cultures of the other regions of South and South East Asia.

In view of the larger number of articles from scholars and the length of the proceedings of the Seminars, some sections like 'Institutions, Scholars and Artists' had to be omitted. As in the previous issue, the authors were left free to use such diacritical marks as conformed to the system they followed, in view of the separate systems of transliteration in languages like, Tamiḻ and Sanskrit.

The Institute is grateful to all scholars who have contributed a variety of articles on Culture and Traditions which appear in this issue. It had to hold over some valuable articles for consideration of space, for publication in the next issue.

The Government of Tamiḻ Nāḍu and the Government of India have kindly continued the financing of the Institute and its activities. The University of Madras continues to accommodate the Institute in its building, providing it with the concomitant amenities and, the full and hearty co-operation, of all its Departments in the activities of the Institute. It also bears the cost of paper and printing of issues of the Bulletin The Institute is grateful for all this valuable help, which has enabled it to continue to function and carry on its activities.

The Institute is proud that Dr. S. Malcolm Adiseshiah who was responsible for the starting of this Institute, has since taken charge as Vice-Chancellor and is the ex-officio President of this Institute.

The Executive Committee has also given valuable assistance in running this Institute. Due to the increased costs of printing and paper, a cut in the distribution has become unavoidable. There has been unavoidable delay at the printing stage of this Bulletin due to various reasons resulting in its rather late publication.

Madras,
12—12—1975.

Dr. K. K. PILLAY,
Director.

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ARTICLES

A STUDY OF THE CULTURE AND HISTORY OF THE KĀRKĀTTĀR

Thiru M. ARUNACHALAM, M.A.

1. INTRODUCTION

The origins of any community of people in India with a historic past are shrouded in myths and lost in the mists of prehistory. This is not peculiar to India alone. The Greeks, the Romans, the Scandinavians, the Anglo-Saxons, the French and even the Persians trace their origin to some myth. The stories connected with Zeus and Jupiter, Thor and Odin, King Arthur and his Round Table, Charlemagne, and Sohrab and Rustum are legion. No wonder the origin of the Kārkāttār community amidst us in Tamiḻnād is also shrouded in myth and legend.

The Kārkāttār community now is generally a middle class agricultural community which clustered certain areas in the Chōḻanād; the members of that community occupy whole areas in Tanjāvūr district in the Sirkāḻi, Māyūram, Kumbakōṇam and Nannilam taluks; large areas in Kāraikkāl, in Nāgappaṭṭinam and Pāpanāsam taluks; whole areas in the Chidambaram and Vriddhāchalam taluks of South Arcot district; large areas in Uḍayārpālayam, Tiruchi, and Lālguḍi taluks in the Tiruchirāppaḷḷi district; they occupy large pockets in the Tirunelvēli, Ṭenkāsi and Ambāsamudram taluks of Tirunelvēli district; Madurai and Nilakkoṭṭai taluks of Madurai district and Sāttur, Srivilliputtūr and Aruppukkōttai taluks of Rāmanāthapuram district. The first world war had dislodged them from their pinnacles and sent them job-hunting and settled them in, urban areas like Madras, Tanjāvur and Tiruchirāppaḷḷi. The second world war and the series of new land laws which were ushered in the wake of that war and of Indian Independence have snatched away all the land from them and left them one of the most economically backward classes;

No chronicle of the history or evolution of the Karkāttār had ever been written. The present account is only an attempt to present legendary accounts, popular traditions, available historical references and literary material in the form of a connected narrative. If history were to depend only on fully recorded and documented evidence, then no history of any South Indian Community is possible. Our elders, at all levels of society considered matters of the spirit and of culture as the only important factors in society. They attached scant importance to recorded history. Hence we have no history and have therefore to reconstruct history afresh, to embrace all the available sources of the past and all the institutions of the present, consistent with factual veracity and cultural unity and development. The following is such a reconstructed account.

This account applies to the condition of the Kārkāttār up to the first quarter of the twentieth century, that is, upto the end of the first world war; the war ushered in many major revolutions in the life and outlook of the people at all levels and the Kārkāttār were no exception.

2. SOME LEGENDS AND TERMINOLOGY

The Vēḷāḷar in general

At the outset one thing has to be clearly borne in mind. The so called Āryan-Dravidian unification happened in Tamiḻnādu in pre-historic times. We would be wrong if we think of the Vēḷāḷar in terms of Āryan or Dravidian; we would be equally wrong if we try to apply the standards of Varṇa in the Aryan culture to the Vēḷāḷar we know today. Very brave attempts have been made in Tamiḻnādu in the past firstly to equate the Vēḷāḷar with the third Varṇa and call them the Bhūvaiśya (the other two being the Gōvaiśya and Dhanavaiśya). According to these attempts, a Dhanavaiśya is the real Vaiśya, a trader; Gōvaiśya has been called the cowherd; the Bhūvaiśya is the agriculturist. This theory gained grand from among those who accepted the Āryan Varṇa theory but did not like to accept that the Vēḷāḷar were Sūdras.

Another attempt was made by very learned Śaiva writers to accept the Vēḷāḷar as Sūdras and then make a division among

them as Sat-Sūdras (the elite) and the Asat-Sūdras (the masses). On the face of it, this classification seems to be quite absurd. The Kārkāttār with whom we are concerned here had been the most enlightened, cultured and aristocratic group in the land and to call them Sūdras is ridiculous. The only logical way out is not to apply the Varṇa theory to them at all. This is actually also the correct factual position. The caste system of the Āryans does not apply to these people. They were outside the pale of that classification. We do not wish to be drawn into any controversy here regarding race or language, or Varṇa. The term Vēḷāḷar has nothing to do with the Varṇa classification.

One learned scholar Mr. M- Raghava Aiyangar has written a book on this subject entitled *Vēḷir Varalāṛu.* According to the legend that Vēḷāḷar are Vaiśyas, he has tried to prove that the Vēḷir mentioned in the Sangham literature are a princely clan of Yādhavas who came into Tamiḻnādu from Dvāraka along with Krişṇa. This may appear quite plausible as an academic discussion, but faced with the communities as they exist today, it will be seen that the Yādhavas are different and that they cannot be equated with the Vēḷāḷar.

Leaving apart these discussions, we shall just refer to the mention of the Vēḷāḷar in some books of the first millennia after Christ. Maṇimēkhalai has been quoted below: The word *Vēḷāṇmai* which we take to mean as agriculture, was interpreted as benevolence, helping others, in the early period. The Kuṛaḷ says that the householder's business in life is to feed the guests and help others. Another book says, "He is a Vēḷāḷa who would not take his food, keeping a guest hungry outside". This has been praised as the real characteristic of the Vēḷāḷar in all subsequent literature.

The early lexical work, *Divākaram* equates Kāarāḷar and Vēḷāḷar with Sūdra, in accordance with the belief of those times. On the same basis, it defines the duty of the Vēḷāḷar as six; tilling the soil, tending the cattle, trade, music, weaving and service to the twice-born. Though the twice-born, the Brahmin, was held in great esteem, the status mentiond for the Vēḷāḷar

was not a reality but was only a reflection of Vēdic concept of Varṇa; this was far from the reality. The same Nighaṇṭu (lexicon) says in another place that the nature of the Vēḷāḷar may be defined as the ten; carrying out the command of the king, supporting the fallen, working with the arms for discharging their duties to the State, having sympathy and mercy in the heart for the weakness and the suffering of the others, supporting kith and kin, ceaseless industry, paying the taxes, good neighbourliness, feeding the newcomers and upright conduct. Surely these are the codes of conduct for the nobility in any land, not for the slaves or the Sūdras. Thus we realize that there was a confusion caused by the attempt to apply the Varṇa Dharma to the indigenous Vēḷāḷar's life and culture. The confusion has been recognized by the later *Çūḍāmaṇi Nighaṇṭu* (16th century) which drops the Sūdra concept and merely says that the Vēḷāḷar are those that give. We also learn that Vēḷ is not the same as Vēḷāḷar, but that it was a title conferred on the Vēḷāḷar by the king.

During the later years, many different classes began calling themselves Vēḷāḷar. The Kārkāttār, who were the only Vēḷāḷar in the pre-historic past, gave rise to many divisions which were Vēḷāḷar and yet called themselves by different names. Some of these have been commented upon elsewhere. But in the recent past, very many communities have begun calling themselves Vēḷāḷar, so much so, that one unacquainted with their history cannot know if one was a Vēḷāḷar at all. The surname has now become so popular that when one is particular to call himself a Vēḷāḷar, we have to presume that he is not a Vēḷāḷar. The new aspirants to the title had become so many, that a natural indication seems to have been adopted in the last century. These aspirants call themselves Vēḷāḷar and name the others as the original or orthodox Vēḷaḷar, or Śaiva Vēḷāḷar. This term will be explained later.

The Vēḷāḷar are called the children of the Gaṅga; probably this refers to the remote past, when the Tamilians held sway over the whole of the Bharata-kanda and had brought the Gangetic plains also under cultivation. With the passage of time, they happened to be confined to the south, but yet the memory of the

past is preserved in the legend that they are the Gangā-putra; this does not mean that they migrated from the Gangetic valley, but only means that their area of occupation included those areas also.

The term Kāräḷar

Kārāḷar is the term used to denote the Kārkāttār community from very early times. *Maṇimēkhalai*, one of the five great Epics in the Tamiḻ language, makes use of the term twice in the phrase, *Kārāḷar Saṇbai* meaning the city Sīkāḻi of the Kārkāttār. Saṇbai is one of the 12 names of Sīkāḻi made immortal by Saint Jñānasambanda in his song sung before the Pandiya prince of Madurai, saying that he hailed from Sīkāḻi the holy place with twelve names. It was called *Saṇbai* because of the wild growth of the elephant grass, *sambankōrai* in the place. Sīkāḻi was then a seat of the Kārkāttār and so was called Kārāḷar Saṇbai in the epic. The history of Tamiḻ literature and the history of the Śaiva religion tell us that the city was the headquarters or the capital city of the Śaiva religion from very early times upto the fifteenth century A.D.

The term Kārāḷar means, those engaged in agriculture; it has had the same connotation through the centuries even upto the present day. *Kār* meant the steel blade of the plough, or ploughshare; *kār-āṇmai* meant the utilization of the ploughshare, i.e., agriculture; and kār-āḷar meant those who were masters of the ploughshare and they were naturally the Kārkāttār. Later Nighaṇṭu or lexicographical works defined Kārāḷar as Bhūvaiśyar, when they sought to bring the Kārkāttār under the Vaiśya varṇa of the Āryan four varṇa classification, making it into three as Bhūvaiśya, Gōvaiśya and Dhanavaiśya. Here we would just state that Kārāḷar is Kārkāttār. Even today we find members of the community styling themselves as Kārāḷar in the transfer of property documents registered before a government registrar of assurances; the phrasing invariably is: so-and-so, son of so-and-so, Kārālar, Śivamatam, mirāsu (although they have been stripped of all mīrāsu by the post-war land tenure laws). No other community calls itself Kārāḷar. These practices indicate that all the literary references to Kārāḷar are to the Kārkāṭtār.

The title Kāraik-kāṭṭār

The Kārkāttār are widely known by the two titles Kāraik-kāṭṭār and Kārkāttār; the second occasionally extended as Kāraik-kāṭṭār. However, even informed persons are not sure today which is the correct title. They believe that Kāraikāṭṭār is merely a corrupted form of the title Kārkāttār which is literary and pure. But we shall here show that both the terms are correct literary forms and that they represent two distinct pre-historic legends pertaining to the origin of these people.

In the very distant past, Śiva and Pārvati indulged in a sport for the benefit of mankind, particularly the people of Tamiḻnādu. Pārvati coming behind Śiva closed His eyes with her two palms. As His eyes are the Sun and the Moon, this closure resulted in the shutting off of all light from the Sun and the Moon and consequently the whole universe was enveloped in darkness. All activity stopped and there was a temporary panic. As Pārvati removed her hands, again there was light and, activity was resumed. Śiva rebuked Pārvati saying, "My dear, you have caused a temporary panic and misery to the universe by your prank. This is not proper. You have to make amends." With a feeling of remorse She replied, "What shall I do?". He ordered: "The only amends is to worship us. You go to the earth and perform due worship for us there. Of the 1008 sacred places on earth, Kāśi and Kāṇçi are equally holy. Go to Kānci. There you will find us seated in liṅga form under the single-fruited mango tree. Worship us there. In due time, we shall appear before you and take you back to Kailāś".

So Pārvati came to Kānci with Her maids and began a ritualistic worship of Ēkāmbara-murti, i.e., the form of Siva enshrined under the mango tree on the banks of the river Kampa. Her maids raised a flower garden for Her there and supplied Her with all the accessories for the pūja. Pūja did not mean mere worship of the image; it also implied the practising of the traditional 32 charities or duties. In practising these she was assisted by many families of Vēḷāḷar who were servants under Her. Those families lived in Kāraikkāḍu, an area close to

Ēkambam where Pārvati's pūja was being performed. It was so called because it was overgrown with the sharp spined scrub, kārai (*canthium*; kāḍu-jungle). This place was also a separate Śiva temple where Śiva is named Satya Vrata Kāraikaṭṭar and His consort is Kāmākṣi. It has been sanctified in the hymns of Saint Thirujñānasambanda. The purāṇas of Kānci mention this shrine called Tiruk-kaccineṛi Kāraikkāḍu, as next in importance to Ēkāmbaram. These Vēḷāḷar living in Kāraikkāḍu and assisting Pārvati in Her pūja were naturally called Kāraikkāṭṭār, 'the people of Kāraikkāḍu.' (Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Aiyar has mentioned this derivation in many places in his writings).

Pārvati's pūja continued for some time and the day came when She was due to return to Kailāś. She then received two measures of paddy seeds from Śiva. She gave it to these servants of Hers and told them: "My children, use this paddy to produce agricultural wealth from the soil in order that the traditional 32 duties may be continued by you on earth." From that day the Kāraikkāṭṭār has been tilling the soil and rearing the paddy with the seeds given by Pārvati and fostering *dharma* on earth.

Kāraikkāḍu seems to have had considerable importance not only in Dēvāram but also in other literature. The Virutti, commentary on *Yāpparuṅgalam*, (both by eminent Jain writers of the 11th century) cites a a verse in praise of Śiva at Kacci-neṛik-kāraikkāḍu. This is obviously taken from a larger work; the original is not extent now. The verse ends with the words

'niḻalaḍaindār tammai - neṛikkārai kkāṭṭān'

meaning that Śiva of Kāraikkāḍu will not direct those who go to His feet, along the hard path of thorns. The full verse is in *maḍakku*, a kind of pun where the end part of each line is repeated in the next; it is a fine piece of lyric.

The surname Piḷḷai

The Kārkāṭṭār living in all the areas in Tamiḻnādu are known as Piḷḷai. There is considerable significance in their use of this term as a surname. Piḷḷai means son; because the Kāraik-kāṭṭār inherited the duty of performing all the thirty two dharmas

on earth from Śakti Pārvati the Supreme Mother, they stand in the relationship of a son to Her. Grammar will tell us that Piḷḷai is the term applicable to the young ones of the humans and some other species in God's creation, the animal and the vegetable kingdom included. The term Piḷḷai not only signifies this idea of succession like a son, but is also meaningful in other ways.

We know Gaṇēśa is the Mūtta-Piḷḷaiyār (the elder son, *yār* being merely an honorific suffix) and Muruga is the Iḷaya Piḷḷaiyār (the younger son). The term Piḷḷaiyār used without any attribute means Gaṇēśa. We have again another valuable literary tradition; Tiru Jñānasambanda, who drank deep of the milk of Grace from Pārvati is always called as Piḷḷaiyār, Tiru Jñānasambandap-piḷḷaiyār by Sēkkiḻār in his *Periya purāṇam*; another term is Āḷudaiya Piḷḷaiyār, the son who was taken as a servent by God, and who takes us all as his servants. Sambanda is the first spiritual preceptor of the followers of Śiva. Again the legend relating to Caṇḍēśa is well known. Born as a Brahmin child, he was worshipping a liṅga in sand on the banks of the river, bathing it in the milk obtained from the cows left to his care, when his father kicked the milk pot, thinking that the boy was wasting the milk. Caṇḍēśa saw this obstruction to his worship and with a stick lying nearby, chopped his father's leg into two. For this act of dedicated service, today, Caṇḍēśa has a unique place of honour in the Śiva temple where it is ordained that, only a worship of Caṇḍēśa will complete Śiva worship. The story of Caṇḍēśa is the 26th in the *Periya purāṇam* of Sēkkiḻār. Here he refers to the young Brahmin devotee the Śēyñalūrp-piḷḷaiyār. (Sēyñalūr is his village). The term Piḷḷaiyār here, as in the case of Sambanda, is not only a term of endearment, but also one of adoption, as he says in the next verse (1269) that the young boy became the son of Hara even with this physical body.

It is quite evident that the Śaivas who were great lovers of the *Periya purāṇam* and who never failed to read it in their daily pūja and prayers, were moved by this term and adopted it as their surname. We find Tiruççiṟṟambalamuḍaiyān Perumān Nambi, who was a trusted commander of King Rājarāja II (1146–63) being

called Perumān Nambippiḷḷai. The story of this commander is given later. The term has remained and from that day to this, Piḷḷai had come to mean a Kārkāttār.

The term Piḷḷai had then acquired such a great repute that we find in the Vaiṣṇava tradition many Ācāryas calling themselves Piḷḷai-Nampiḷḷai, Periyavāccānpiḷḷai, Tūppulpiḷḷai (Vēdānta Dēśika), Naḍuvil Tiruvīdhip-piḷḷai, Vaḍakkut Tiruvīdhip-piḷḷai, Piḷḷai Lōkācārya, Viḷāncolaip-piḷḷai, Tiruvāymoḻip-piḷḷai and so on. This indicates the great esteem which the term had come to acquire in society.

The honorific suffix '*ār*' as in Mudaliyār and Cheṭṭiyār is not added to the word Piḷḷai; the implication is that the mere word *Piḷḷai* is sufficiently significant and respectable; *ār* is added only when the word is required to denote the sons of Śiva, as Piḷḷaiyār or Iḷaya Piḷḷaiyār. When at a later date, an honorific suffix was sought to be added to the word, the word aiyan was added to Piḷḷai to sound like "Piḷḷaiyan"; this was the surname by which Veḍamalaiyappa of the 17th century was referred.

The esteem that was attached to the term Piḷḷai is also seen from another example. In an account of the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam Vēḷāḷar, we find that they are invariably referred to as Mudalip-piḷḷai. The Toṇḍamaṇḍalam people are generally known as Śaiva Mudaliyār; but here we see that the term Mudalip-piḷḷai was thought to be more significant in connotation.

Of course in the later centuries, the term had become cheap and any one who had no traditional or community background began to call himself a Piḷḷai. New converts to Christianity called themselves Piḷḷai, just as priests among them called themselves Aiyars. This only points to the veneration that had attached itself to the term Piḷḷai.

A further note may be added here. The Kārkāttār are always known by the title or surname Piḷḷai. It so happened that a few generations back, a few Kārkāttār went out to several places outside their usual settlements and took to trade. In consonance

with the general nomenclature of the traders everywhere, they also were called Cheṭṭiyār. Large groups of them are found in Kumbakoṇam. They are all really Kārkāttār, preserving the gōtra title and other characteristic features. Somehow, their origin had been forgotten in the recent past. But now they are recalling their past, and are taking steps to join the main stream of their fold. Several marriages also are taking place having this integration in view.

The title Kārkāttār

As time passed, the Vēḷāḷar began to expand and migrate to the south. They settled themselves in the entire Coḷa territory and became the back-bone of the life, culture and administration of the area. It may be of some interest to note that the South Car Street of Tiru-Ārūr is still known as Kāraikkāṭṭār Vīdi and Pukaḻ-ābharaṇat-tiruvīdi.

In further course of time they moved further south and a section of the spreading wave of the Kāraikkāṭṭār settled in Pāṇḍinād and its capital city, Madurai. All this happened in the ages prior to recorded history. These people were all devotees of Śiva; their one vocation in life was agriculture; their culture consisted of fostering the thirty two dharmas or acts of charity. They followed in all the areas where they settled down, the highest moral code which won for them the respect and esteem of all members of the society, including royalty everywhere.

During this period, some of the legendary sports of Śiva took place at Madurai. In answer to the prayers of Malayadvaja Pāṇḍiya, ruler of Madurai and his queen Kāñcanamālai, Śakti Pārvati was born as their daughter Mīnākṣi whom Śiva wedded in the name of Sundara Pāṇḍiya and ruled over Madurai. After some time Sundara Pāṇḍiya and Mīnākṣi handed over the administration of the State to their son, Ugrakumāra Pāṇḍiya and went over to their celestial abode, Kailāś.

Indira, Lord of the celestials, was jealous of the glory of Ugrakumāra Pāṇḍiya. This prince unlike the others, did not bow

before Indira as the Cola and the Chēra princes did. This enraged Indira who caused sufficient rains on the Cola and the Chēra territories, and stopped all rains on the Pāṇḍiya State. There was severe drought here, but the Pāṇḍiya prince would not beg a favour of Indira. One day however, the clouds strayed into his air space; Ugrakumāra immediately imprisoned them. As the clouds were not free, no showers fell now on any land. Indira fought with Ugrakumāra but was vanquished. He now sent a messenger to the Pāṇḍiya praying for the release of the clouds and guaranteeing rains. But Ugrakumāra would not heed his words. So some-one had to appear and intercede with the Pāṇḍiya on behalf of Indira and the clouds. The Vēḷāḷar, who did their tilling operations with the help of the rains were naturally friends of the clouds and their master Indira. So they now came forward and stood surety for the future good behaviour of the clouds and of Indira. The Pāṇḍiya accepted the surety of the Vēḷāḷar, as he believed that they were persons who always kept their words and were upright in conduct. The clouds were released. They showered water on all the States and the land was once more prosperous. From that day, the Vēḷāḷar came to be called the Kār-Kattār, 'the Saviours of the clouds'. Indira was also much pleased and he showered many presents on them, chief of them being his own white elephant Irāvatam and his own horse Uchaiśravam. In memory of this incident, these two can still be seen during the Kārkāttār marriage ceremonies installed at the centre close to the *homa* fire-place, round which the newly wedded bride and bridegroom walk three times.

The term Kārkāṭṭār had since come to mean the protectors of the clouds (*kār*), *i.e.* those who stood surety for the *kār*. Another meaning is also given. The steel blade at the tip of the plough (the ploughshare) is called *kār*. The plough made of wood may decay and break with a year's work. But the steel blade is strong and continues to function for a number of years. When the plough became useless, the share is detached and attached to a new plough. These Vēḷāḷar in times of yore set their heart on this blade which turns the soil and makes it cultivable. Hence they were called Kār-kāṭṭār, those who waited for the *kār*,

or, those who had the custody of the *kār*. Kāttār here means, waited (for the *kār*).

3. THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE KĀRKATTĀR

We had stated earlier that the attempt to equate the Kārkāttār (Vēḷāḷar) with the Yādavas is not correct and the attempt to group them under the Vaiśya of the Ārya Varṇas into a separate clan as the Bhū-vaiśya is also not correct. *Tolkāppiyam* lays down that the Vēḷāḷar were agriculturists and that weapons of warfare and floral wreaths worn in battles were conferred on them by the ruling princes. The Vēḷir had the privileged relationship of giving their daughters in marriage to the ruling princes in the Tamiḻnāḍu. Iḷanchēt Cenni, a Cola monarch married a Vēḷāḷar bride from Aḻundur, and his son Karikāl Cola married a Vēḷāḷar bride from Nāṅgur, both flourishing places in Colanād even to-day. Pāri and such other Vaḷḷals (patrons) of the Saṅgam age were the ancestors of the class of people who came later to be known as the Vēḷāḷar.

As stated above, we find in the later period, particularly in the days of the imperial Colas of the 9 to 14th centuries, illustrious Vēḷāḷar chiefs giving their daughters in marriage to the Cola princes. Besides these, there have been also many illustrious chiefs of Vēḷāḷar who had led campaigns against the Cola enemies and come out victorious.

There was a long succession of illustrious army chiefs under all the Cola emperors. For want of definite recorded history we are unable to have here a continuous account of all such heroes and their achievements. However, we shall mention briefly the glory of four of such chiefs whose names have been handed down to posterity as *gōtra* titles.

Viḻuppatarayar:

He was an illustrious commander under Rājādirāja I (1018-54). During the period, the western Cāḷukyas under their king Āgava malla was a source of constant menace to peace in the Cola country. There were several engagements between the

Cāḷukya forces and the Coḷa forces and in a pitched battle in 1054 at Koppam, Rājādirāja himself was killed while fighting seated on the back of an elephant; his younger brother Rājēndra II took over the command immediately on the battle field and put to route the Cālukya forces. In an earlier compaign, Viḷuppataraya had engaged Jayasiṅga, son of Āgava malla on the battle field and slew him and the Cāḷukya forces fled. In recognition of this significant service, Rājādirāja gave Viḷuppataraya the title of Jayasiṅga kulakāla (annihilator of the Jayasiṅga tribe) and presented him with a village of several acres of land in Māyūram taluk and named it as Jayasiṅga kulakāla nallur. The place exists today as Kēsingan. The descendants of Viḷuppataraya, who took their family or *gōtra* name from him had lived in the same village near the Śiva temple at Attur till about four decades back when the last of the family who had only a female issue gave her in marriage and left the village. Many families exist today in the Cidambaram taluk and in Batlaguṇḍu in Madurai who are the descendants of this Viḷuppataraya. History tells us that he was also a high administrative officer under Vira Rājēndra (1063—1070), last brother of Rājādiraja.

Munaiyatarayar: This is another magic name to conjure with. He was one of the heroic commanders who assisted Karuṇākaratoṇḍamān in his expedition against the north Kaliṅgas by about 1105 A.D. and celebrated by Jayamkoṇḍār in his *Kaliṅgattu-pparaṇi*; he has also been praised by Oṭṭakūttar. In the days of Vikrama Coḷa, he was administrative officer at Tirukkaṇṇapuram in Tanjāvur district. He was an ardent worshipper of Viṣṇu.

Once there was a severe famine in the area. Taking pity on the misery of the people around, Munaiyataraya distributed all the paddy from the State granary under him to the hunger-stricken people. Tale bearers were there in plenty, as now, and they poisoned the ears of Vikrama Coḷa against this officer. The enraged king clapped him in prison without even an enquiry. The loving wife of the chief sent messengers to represent her husband's case to the king and do justice. She was herself a

poet. She wrote a fine lyrical verse saying that if Munaiyataraya did not return to her the next day, he might not see her alive. Legend had also taken a hand in this story. Because of his piety and devotion, Sourirājap-perumāḷ, the Lord of Kaṇṇapuram, appeared in a dream to the Cōḷa that night and instructed him to release the devotee. The king was amazed at the intervention of the Lord and so released him the next morning and sent him home with all honours. His wife was very happy at his return and in gratitude prepared a delicious *poṅgal* in ghee as food offering to the Souriraja worshipped in their home. When Munaiyataraya was offered this food. he found it extremely sweet and declared, "let this be dedicated to Souriraja." When the temple priests opened the *sanctum* in the morning they found the crumbs of *poṅgal* strewn all round the *mūrti*. They reported this immediately to the king who caused an investigation to be made. The crumbs were found strewn from the temple to the house of the chief. The king took this to be God's own recognition of the devotion of Munaiyataraya and from that day ordered that the same *poṅgal* be offered as food for Sourirajaperumaḷ at noon. It came to be called the *Munaiyatarayan poṅgal*; this is being done even today. An image of Munaiyataraya is installed in the temple and the *poṅgal* after being offered to Sourirajaperumal is also being offered to the Munaiyatharayan image today with all honours.

This Munaiyataraya was probably a descendant of Narasiṅga munaiarayan, who brought up Saint Sundara when he was a child and, who was himself a canonized Saint. The term Munaiyataraya became a *gōtra* name later and is common among the Kārkāttār in the Cōḷa Nādu and also Pāṇḍinād today. Munaiyaḍuvār, the Saiva Nayanār, Saint of Nedūr, might have been an ancestor of these chiefs.

Kāliṅgarāyar: He was a commander under Kulōttunga I (1070–1120) and then under his son Vikrama (1118–1133). He helped the kings to win many battles. Originally he came from Manavil a place in Toṇḍainad. He was known by several names such as Manavil kūttan, Naralōkavīran, Arumbākkiḷan etc. The

title of Kāliṅgarāya was conferred on him by the Cōḻas for his meritorious war service. His valour is also attested by Oṭṭakkūttar. Today Kāliṅgarāya is remembered for his scores of services to the Cidambaram and Tiru-Adikai temples. 36 veṇbas inscribed in the Cidambaram and 25 in the other temple enumerate his services. He gold-plated many parts of the roof of Natarāja's hall; gifted many lamps; had many ghee abhiṣēkas performed. He constructed the hundred-pillared hall and many other halls and the steps on the banks of the Śivagaṅga tank in the temple. He raised a flower garden in the temple. He constructed the Sivakāmasundari temple thereunder the orders of Kulōttunga II (1133–1150). He caused the Dēvāram to be inscribed on copper plates. He also constructed a hall for Dēvāram singing. Similarly he constructed the Śakti shrine in Tiru-Adikai, the Natarāja shrine, the Vāgīśar shrine and performed other services. He also rendered similar services to many temples in Toṇḍai Nāḍu and in Cōḻa Nāḍu.

His descendants have since come to be known as Kāliṅgarāyars. There are numerous families in the Tanjāvūr and Tirunelvēli districts bearing this *gōtra* title. The famous poet Śaiva-Ellappa Nāvalar (16th century) belonged to this *gōtra.*

Pallavatarayar: Perhaps this officer was the most important political chief of the period. He was a minister and military commander under Rājarāja II (1146–1163). He was known by several names such as Kuḷattūruḍaiyan, Tiruchiṟṟambalamuḍaiyān, Perumān nambi etc. He was given the title Pallavataraya by Rājarāja. He is also mentioned by Oṭṭakkūttar in his songs. He beloņged to Kuḷattūr: this has become a *gōtra* title, Kuḷattuḍa, some times corrupted as Orattuḍa. Kuḷattūr is now known as Pallavarāyanpettai in honour of the residence of this chief and his descendants in the 12th century.

In 1163, Rājarāja was on his death-bed in the Paḻayārai palace near Kumbakōnam. He had no children. Perumāṉ nambi knew that the king would not survive. So he was anxious that succession to the throne should happen smoothly without any political confusion and that peace should reign in the land. With the King's permission he took the two children who were in

Gaṅgai-koṇḍa-Cōḷapuram palace to Paḷayāṛai. The children were the grandchildren of a daughter of Vikramachōḷa, grandfather of Rājarāja. There he had the first of the children crowned as King, in 1163 as Rājādhirāja II (from 1163-1178). Rājarāja died on the second day after Rājādhirāja's coronation. During this prince's reign, Perumān nambi acted as regent.

The whole story of this regent and this episode is recorded in a long inscription of the Pallavarāyanpet temple. This place is a well known suburb of Māyūram today. Perumān nambi had secured significant victories over the Chēras and the Siṅgalas (in Ceylon). He was a very loyal follower of Rājarāja in whose name he had built the existing temple of Pallavarāyanpet which was then known as Rājarājēsvaram. During Rājādirāja's rule, he fought many battles in Pāṇḍinād and placed on the throne Kulasēkhara Pāṇḍiya who had come to him for help. He died in 1171. Forty vēlis of land (more than 260 acres) in the area were gifted by the king to the widows and children of Perumān nambi.

Looking back into the pages of the history of a period of 800 years ago, we see in Perumān nambi a loyal and powerful chief who was responsible for saving the land from chaos at a time when there was no direct heir to the throne and for arranging a succession with great forethought. History tells us that this succession lasted for more than 100 years after him, till Rājendrachōla died in 1279 without a heir.

A study of the inscription of the ruling dynasties in Tamiḷnādu is certain to bring to light many more such Kārkāttār heroes who have illumined the pages of the history of the land.

Vadamalaiyappa-Piḷḷaiyan

We had dealt earlier with the migration of the Kārkaṭṭār from Kañcīpuram to the Kāvēri delta and later to the Pāṇḍinād. All this was in the pre-historic times. We may mention here a further migration of the Kārkāttār to the southern tip of the peninsula which took place in recent times; it is part of recorded history. When Tirumalai Nāyak was ruling over Madurai and the

south, he was not able to collect the revenues from the Tirunelvēli area and so was on the look out for a capable officer who could be put in command of the southern regions for collection of revenues. He came to hear of the administrative ability of Kāvai-Vaḍamalaiyappa Piḷḷai, who was then living at Nīdūr, a small place with a Śiva shrine close to Māyūram. It was then a Kārkāttār village having sixty families, all related to one another who were all industrious, capable and honer and whose leader was Vaḍamalaiyappa. Tirumalai summoned Piḷḷai to Madurai, and immediately put him in charge of the southern area with headquarters at Tirunelvēli. Piḷḷai took all the sixty families from Nīdūr to Tirunelvēli and stationed them in all the important trouble-centres in the area as village karṇams and his task of administering the area became comparatively easy. Nāyak held him in high esteem.

Vaḍamalaiyappa belonged to the *Nāranakkuḍa gōtra.* He was a devout follower of Murugan and the temple at Tiruccendūr naturally attracted him. During that period, the first half of the 17th century, the Dutch carried away the image of Muruga from the temple and threw it into the sea.

Some time after Vaḍamalaiyappa assumed charge, he had a dream in which Murugan of Tiruccendūr appeared and told him to go out to the sea and search for his image in a place where a lime fruit would be found floating on the waves. So he set out on a *kattamaram* with a few divers and reached the indicated spot, where he found the lime fruit floating and also the Brahminy kite circling over-head. Tying up his clothes tightly, he jumped into the waves, went to the bottom and found the image. Lifting it up in his arms, he came to the surface. The image was then brought to the temple and installed with due ceremonies and pomp. A contemporary poet by name Venṛimālaik-kavirāya, who was one of the priests privileged to perform the pūja in the temple and who had also written the puraṇa for the temple, wrote a *kīrttanam* to celebrate the occasion; this begins with the words: "This is an auspicious occasion for all of us, when you deigned to return to the temple, Muruga." The

poet mentions the year as Saka 1576 (A. D. 1654) and mentions therein the devotion of Vaḍamalaiyappa. This *kīrttanam* is the first *kīrttanam* in the Tamiḻ language. Vaḍamalaiyappa Piḷḷai was thence forward called Piḷḷaiyan. (Piḷḷai-Ayyan, the great among the Piḷḷais) and this title is still given to all the members of his family. In any domestic function today in the Tirunelvēli area, the first seat of honour is reserved for a member from this family.

In honour of this achievement, Piḷḷai was then given the privilege of the first worship (archanai and maṇḍakappaḍi) in the Murugan temple on the day of the temple festival. This practice goes on to this day. As if to emphasize this, an anecdote relating to Kaṭṭabomman is also narrated in Tiruccendūr. One day at the time of a festival there, Kaṭṭabomman had camped at Tiruccendūr. He desired pūja to be done on his behalf first that day. The temple priests refused to do it. Naturally he was much enraged. He rode up to the temple and hauled up the priests for disobeying his words; they meekly submitted that the first pūja was always the privilege of Vaḍamalaiyappa and then narrated to him the events. When he heard them, he was very much moved. He allowed the first pūja to be done as usual and agreed to have his, done next.

During the period when the Murugan image was under the sea, no one knew where it was thrown. So an attempt was made to cast a fresh image and install it in Tiruccendūr. But by the time it was cast and by the time it was actually on its way to Tiruccendūr, Vaḍamalaiyappa had recovered the original and installed it. The new image had by that time reached a place now called Murugan-Kuṟicci; it was installed there in a newly built temple which took its name after Muruga; it is now kept in the Pāḷayamkoṭṭah Śiva temple.

The *Mūla mūrti* (Idol of *sanctum sanctorum)* in Tiruccendūr was desecrated by the Dutch. In its place a new image carved from the rock on the west bank of Tambraparṇi on which Piḷḷaiyan's mother used to perform her pūja, was installed; a second image carved from the same rock was installed in the

place which is now celebrated as the Kuṛukkuttuṛai temple in the river bed.

Today there is a large cluster of the Kärkättär population in and around Tirunelvēli. Many of the village karṇams still continue in the villages where Piḷḷaiyan had established them. Some of them however had left their stations to look for more advantageous jobs in the towns.

Other Patrons and Chiefs

Along with such eminent chiefs of the Çoḻa period, there were other such chiefs and patrons. We shall here notice two such patrons.

Saḍaiyappa Vaḷḷal: He was the patron of Kambar; he lived in Tiruveṇṇainallūr and was a Kārkāttār. This place is not to be confused with the place of the same name associated with Sundaramūrti, the Samaya āchārya, and with Meykaṇḍa Dēva, some centuries later. Saḍaiyappar is the name of the Lord Śiva enshrined at Tiruppanandāḷ; it is a name commonly found among the Kārkāttār. The founder of the charities now known as the Anbanāthapuram Family Charities which runs the AVC college at Māyūram was a Saḍaiyappar. Saḍaiyappar is a name of Śiva, the Lord "who wears the matted locks." During the days of Kambar, the crown of the Çoḻa emperors was always in the custody of the Kārkāttārs. On the death of the ruling monarch, when the successor was installed, it was brought from the custody of the Kārkāttār concerned at the time of the coronation and given to the Śivāchārya to be placed on the head of the newly anointed ruler. It was always the Śivāchārya who did the coronation. The Kārkāttār was recognized as the real producer of wealth in the land and so he was given the custody of the crown, the most important insignia of royalty. Kambar remembers this contemperory tradition very well and invokes it for the coronation of Rāma at Ayōdya after his return with Sita from exile:

> "The crown was handed over by the forefathers of Saḍaya,
> Vasiṣta received it and placed it on the head of Rama".

The concept that the crown is in the custody of the Kārkāttār, the agriculturists as the real producers of wealth, is most significant. There are many stories connected with Saḍayappa Vaḷḷal; they are well known and do not need a repetition here.

Neṟkunṟam Kiḻār: He was a poet and patron of poets who lived in 12th century in a village in Toṇḍainad, known as Nelkunṟam (meaning a hill of paddy). Many stories abound praising his gifts to poets and his sensitivity to poets' poverty. There is one fine story. Asking for help always demeans one. Kiḻar was able to sense this feeling of reluctance on the part of the poets to ask anything. So he had spread sand in the courtyard of his house. Poets who came to him for help were simply to write their request on the sand. He would see the writing from a concealed place and would immediately grant the request. Kiḻar belonged to the *Kaḷappāḷa gōtra.* We may remember that Meykaṇḍār the exponent of the Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy, came also of the *Kaḷappāḷa gōtra*; we know his father's name was Achyuta, the Kaḷappāḷa; probably he came of a different branch of the same *gōtra.* He also lived about the same time. Kiḻar was also a poet. Hc has written an *antadi* poem on Śiva enshrined at Tiruppugalūr in 100 verses.

Neṟkunṟam kiḻar had given a daughter in marriage to Perumān Nambi Pallavatarayar. She was also one of the beneficiaries under the grants made by Rājādirāja on the death of Pallavataraya.

We hear of many other Kārkāttār chiefs who were patrons of poets. There was one Uttaṇḍan in Taiyūr on whom a *kōvai* poem was sung the 16th century; one Ellārkku Nainār in Tirunelvēli, 'of the Kāraikāttār family' who is celebrated in poems of the period of Vaḍamalaippan, besides many others.

4. MORE LEGENDS

The Mukkuḷam Legend

A tradition relating to the Kārkāttār has been recorded in the *Cōḻa Maṇḍala Satakam.* The Mukkuḷam (three tanks) of Tiru-

veṇkaḍu near Kāvērippaṭṭinam in the Coḷanād has been extolled even in the songs of Thiru Jñanasambanda (7th century). It is a well known story that Achyuta Kaḷappāḷa of Pennāgadam was directed by his preceptor to bathe in the Mukkuḷam when he prayed to God for the boon of a child. (12-13th century). The Satakam records a much earlier legend. When the Coḷa prince Karikāla was to be crowned, the question as to who were entitled to crown him arose. It was then ascertained that the Kārkāttār were of 64 families, and that, only they were entitled to this exclusive privilege. The legend says that before the actual coronation ceremony, the Kārkāttārs were required to bathe in the Mukkuḷam with a lighted lamp on their head, and they actually did so and came out with the lamp unextinguished by the waters of the tank, and they were asked, after this water ordeal, to crown the Coḷa prince. This legend is still preserved in some Tālāṭṭu songs (lullaby). This will also substantiate the statement of Kambar that the forefathers of Saḍaiyappa Vaḷḷal were given the custody of the crown of the ruling dynasty of the land.

The Paḷayanūr legend

The Kāraikkāṭṭār who were in Kaccineṛik-kārāikkāḍu began to expand and colonise other areas. Several of them went and settled around the modern Tiru-Ālankāḍu shrine, and it had come down in history as Paḷaiyanūr (the old village). A tragic incident took place in that village which is always held up as a monument to the honour and probity of the Kārkātta Vēḷāḷar. A Cheṭṭi had for some reason killed his wife. She took the form of a ghost and caught hold of him once when he was going along the road there and, in the guise of a pretty woman claimed him as her husband. He realised she was a ghost and tried to run away. But she took hold of him and brought him before the Council of Elders at Paḷaiyanūr and put forward her plea for being restored to her husband; she also produced in evidence 'their' child (made up by a ghost trick) which ran up to the Cheṭṭi and clung to him. This evidence seemed to be conclusive and so the Council of Elders which consisted of 70 Kārkātta Vēḷāḷar asked him to take back his wife. But when he remonstrated that the woman

was, in reality a ghost, they offered to stand surety for her good conduct. Accordingly, they shut up the man and woman in a house for the night. But at day break they found only the bones of the Cheṭṭi; the woman had disappeared with her child, having eaten up the Cheṭṭi. The horror-struck Vēḷāḷar could do nothing now; so they gave up their lives in a fire, as they were unable to act up to their promise of safety to the Cheṭṭi.

A long time after the incident, the three ruling princes Cēra, Cola and Pandiya heard of it and went to visit the site of the fire pit. Moved by the sense of honour and sacrifice of the Vēḷāḷar, each prince sang a song on them.

St. Umāpati Śivam, writing on the story of Sēkkiḻar who composed the *Periya Purāṇam,* mentions the above incident and remarks that the greatness of the Vēḷāḷar could not be limited by him in words. He further adds: "When the seedlings transplanted in the fields by the Kārālar grow up luxuriantly, the golden crown worn by the ruling princes also will flourish; the sway of the sceptre of the princes is controlled by the little whips used by the Veḷāḷas for goading the plough oxen."

5. THE CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE KĀRKĀTTĀR

The temr Śaiva

Until the first half of the 20th century (marked by the end of the Second World War and Indian Independence), the term Śaiva had only one connotation: the vegetarian, (as well as a few other limited groups of vegetarians) from time immemorial. Tamil fanaticism which rose to prominence at the close of that period pulled down many happy turns of expression and elements of values and called the Śaiva way of food, the *marakkaṛi uṇavu* (Vegetable food); this was a vulgarization in the ordinary spoken language.

Now coming to the other meaning of Śaiva,—the follower of Śiva, we can point out to certain associations. The Śaivas are said to be of seven classes: The Ādi Śaiva — the temple Archaka or Gurukkaḷ; Anādi Śaiva — He who had no beginning

that is Śiva Himself; Aṇu-Śaiva — the Kshatriya or Vaiśya who has had Śiva dīkṣa; Avāntara Śaiva — the Sūdra who has had the Śiva dīkṣa; Mahā Śaiva – the Brahmin who has had Śiva dīksa; Antya Śaiva and Pravara Śaiva — the mixed tribes who have had Śiva dīkṣa. The simple term Śaiva without any attribute means, the Kārkāttār (as well as a few other limited groups of Veḷāḷar); it does not occur as one of the seven, because it is the *real* Śaiva.

Another point may be noted. The Sangham poems do not speak particularly about the vegetarian way of food. There is always mention of meat and drink. Even the Brahmins of the period were not averse to meat-eating. But yet, even during that period we are able to discover a silver lining—Pāri we have said was a Vēḷāḷar. The Sangham poems tell us that his hill of Paṟambu was besieged by the three ruling princes, who were bent upon destroying him. Kapilar, poet and friend of Pāri, witnessed the siege. He told them, indicating the forest wealth of food in the hill to show that it cannot be starved by any siege. We should note here that be speaks only of plant food (vegetarian) and although the forest and hill abound in a rich variety of game for meat, he does not refer to them; this indicates that though Kapilar himself partook of non-vegetarian food, he could mention only vegetarian food, when he had to mention food in relation to Pari. This adds weight to our claim that the Śaiva meant only the Vēḷaḷar and that the Vēḷāḷar were all vegetarians from the very remote past.

Education and Culture

The Kārkāttār were a highly cultured and educated group, which commanded respect from every class of society including the Brahmins. He was well versed in Tamiḻ literature and the Śaiva canon. It may be pointed out that by virtue of their trusteeship of almost all the temples in the Coḻanād, they were steeped in religious lore and also in the pūja rituals relating to the temple. Many were good scholars in Sanskrit also. In every house-hold, manuscripts of *Tiruviḷayaḍal purāṇam, Tiruvācakam, Periya purāṇam, Viruddhāchala purāṇam, Arunāchala purā-*

Bramōttara kāndam, *Agastiyar Dēvārathirattu* and *Naidatam* could be found even up to the second decade of the present century. It may also be pointed out that most of the palm-leaf manuscripts available in the Coḷanād were from Kārkāttār houses. This argues for the high degree of learning and religious living in the families of Kārkāṭṭārs.

The Kārkāttār lived around Śiva temples. If there was no temple for Śiva, they built at least a temple for Vināyaka. Worship of Māriyamman, Ayyanār etc., there was, no doubt; but this was frowned upon by them, although their family tutelary deity (*Kula Deivam*) was usually some form of Śakti, such as Periyanāyaki, Ankālamman, Māriyamman etc.

The Kārkāttār did indeed lead an austere and disciplined life. Women also were generally literate. Both men and women after a certain stage, had their Śiva-dīkṣa (religions initiation) and they observed their anuṣṭāna (corresponding tn the Brahmin sandyāvandana) every morning and evening. In the evening, members of both the sexes attended the evening temple services. A good percentage of both, performed their Atm rtha Śiva pūja.

Sivaçāryas

In the remote past, when population was not so vast and when communities were closely knit, the Śiva temples were built by Kōccengat Çoḷa.

The Kārkāṭṭār, had set apart some individuals amongst themselves, who were qualified by their erudition, personal discipline, non-attachment and dedication, to be their spiritual heads and gave them the duty of performing the congregational worship (Parārtha pūja), in the temples. In the course of the years these families gradually separated from the main stream of the Kārkāttār, who devoted themselves, not to learning and things of the spirit exclusively, but to agriculture and administration. In time they came to be regarded as a separate caste and were styled as Śivaçāryas, because they were performing Śiva pūja (Parārtha).

But there was a difference. When they rose high in the spiritual practices, unfortunately, they looked up to the regular Smārtha Brahmins in all ritualistic and Sāstraic matters; this was natural because the Brahmins were learned in Sanskrit; the Sanskrit craze caught these people and they even called themselves Brahmins; they had long ago ceased to inter-dine and inter-marry with the parent stock of the Kārkāttār. Their isolation was now complete; they were different from these Vēḷāḷar and different from the Brahmins. So when they wrote down the Āgamas, they called themselves Śivabrāhmanas, said they were superior to the Brahmins, and that they alone were competent to perform Parārtha pūja in the temples.

There is considerable force in this assertion because in all the mantras uttered by these Śivacāryas, as in Sandyāvandanam, the Sun-god figures as Śivasūrya, while in that of the regular Brahmins the sun-god figures as Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa.

A substantial evidence is available for this conclusion from the list of the names of Śivacāryas. A glance at the names will simply show that the first part of each name is exactly the *gōtra* title of the Kārkātta Vēḷāḷa, the next is the proper name or rather the anointed name (Abhiṣēka name) crowned by the term Śiva to indicate that he was a Śiva pūjaka. A few names are given below:

Nāngūruḍaiya Mādēva Tatpuruṣa Śivar; Aymbūruḍaiya Śadā-Śivar; Kavaramaṅgalamuḍaiya Chandrasēkhara Ānanda Śivar; Ayūruḍaiyār; Tirumaṟaikkāḍuḍaiya Isanaśivar; Veṇkāḍuḍaiya Tatpurṣha Śivar; Koṟṟanguḍinḍaiya Śivakaruṇālaya Īsāna Śivar; Maṟaikkāḍuḍaiya Mādēva Vairāgya Śivar.

All the terms ending with uḍaiya represent place names. We have shown that the Kārkāttār had only two types of *gōtra* names; one, titles conferred by the Emperors and the other place names. All the first names in the list given above are place names. Neither do the Kārkāttār know this evolution of the Śivācāryas from among themselves, nor do the Śivācāryas know it, much less acknowledge it. But yet this is the truth. Later,

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to lend greater dignity to the origin of Śivācāryas, a legend was invented in the *Siddhānta Sārāvali* that Rājēndra Cọḷa brought families of Śivācāryas from the banks of the Godavari and settled them in the Tamiḷnādu.[1]

6. THE ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE KĀRKĀTTĀR

Their Status in Society

The Kārkāttār were noted for their generosity. When the Cọḷa emperors built the huge granite temples all over Tamiḷnādu Kārkāttārs endowed them with lavish grants for their daily maintenance. From the day the construction was started, all sections of society gained from temple benefactions.

Attention of the readers may be drawn here to the position of the Kārkāttār in the social system. They were the one clan which received absolutely no benefaction from the temple. They did all the executive, administrative and supervisory service for the temple, in an honorary capacity. They received no payment anywhere for any temple service.

When the Tamiḷ monarchies ceased to exist, these clans took up the temple administration as a matter of hereditary right, which in fact it was, in most places, and saw to it that the temples continued to function. This position they maintained upto the first quarter of the twentieth century. The first World War effected many changes, economic, social and political, which thrust the Kārkāttār young men into the fore of English education and job-hunting and, thereby dislodged them from the lofty pedestal of the giver with which they had been associated from time immemorial.

The Kārkāttār, being the landed gentry in the land were in a position to extend their patronage to art and letters. Kambar lived in an age when there was no powerful monarch to extend him any patronage. Saḍayappa Vaḷḷal extended that patronage to him. A large number of temples today exist in the whole

1. The author of this work, Trilocana was himself a Śivacārya and hence much credence cannot be placed on this.

country. And, with the temples, music and dance flourished. The temple fed the musicians (Nāgasvaram pipers) and dancers. But other types of patronage were extended to them in ordinary life by the Kārkāttār. For marriage functions, birth-day celebrations Viḷakkiḍu and similar family gatherings, the pipers and dancers were invited and paid lavishly. There was no function without the piper and the dancer in Tañjavūr district. In a wider sense we may boldly say that these artists would have languished, but for the support of the Kārkāttār. The patronage given to music and dance naturally extended to Tamiḻ letters also.

The Kārkāttār were also the landed aristocrats in the liberal sense. The farm was known as *Paṇṇai.* The head of the *Paṇṇai* assumed a natural leadership in the village. He was able to arbitrate and settle all kinds of disputes for all the classes in the village.

Economy of the Kārkāttār Life

The Kārkāttār economy in the past was a kind of self-sufficient and self-contained living. The Kārkāttār always lived in clusters in a village. Each family was also a viable unit. Even if the family be poor, it had enough land to raise the necessary food. The agricultural land produced not only rice but all the required pulses. If the family did not have the necessary land, its head-man took out some land on lease from those who could afford it and cultivated it. Never did he think of eking out a livelihood by means other than agriculture. Each house had a spacious garden, if not all round the house, at least at the back of it. In one corner stood the cattle shed with at least one cow and one buffalo for supply of milk; and a minimum of two pairs of bulls for ploughing. The annual accumulation of the dung heap from the shed provided the natural manure for the fields. He had at least two bullock drawn carts; All families put together produced their own cows and work cattle.

There was a large hay-stack in another far corner of the garden which was sufficient for feeding the cattle for the whole year.

Besides, the garden had a cluster of bamboos which supplied the necessary bamboo splinters for the tile-roofing of the house and the necessary spikes and spine for the fence. There were in the garden, mango, lemon, tamarind, *iluppai*, coconut trees which all supplied fruits, tamarind, oil, nuts for cooking and for lamps etc. Also there were portia, margosa, and albizzia trees which supplied the timber for the house, and for cart-making and granary-making. There was a well for supply of water.

It could thus be seen that two of the primary needs of the family—food and shelter—were taken care of by the house gardens and agricultural lands. Out of the surplus in these, he purchased his clothing and a few sundries like kerosene oil, salt etc. Sugar was always purchased except in rare cases where he cultivated some cane.

7. THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE KĀRKĀTTĀR

We shall mention below the Nāyanmār who were Kārkāttārs and the monasteries and orders of spiritual headship founded by them.

The Śaiva Nāyanmār

Sēkkiḻār has sung the lives of the 63 Śaiva saints (Nāyanmār) in his *Periya purāṇam*, a large work of epic proportions in 4286 verses. Among the 63, the largest single group is the Vēḷaḷar group, having 13 Nāyanmār. All of them had lived before the days of Sundarar (C. 700 A.D.) We mention elsewhere Jñānasambandha's glowing tribute to the Vēḷāḷar way of life. Considering all the circumstances, we may conclude that Appar belonged to the Kārkāttār community, although we have no evidence that this name was in vogue in the period.

Saints Kalikkāma and Mānakkañjāra

These two saints lived probably a few decades after Appar. Through other evidences it is clear that they belonged to a community which had later come to be called Kārkāttār.

St. Sundara lived round the year 700 A.D. He has referred to the miracles performed for the sake of Kalikkāma in his song

on Tirup-puṅgūr. Kalikkāma is considered to belong to the Kārkātta Vēḷāḷa community, which is even today the major community in Perumaṅgalam. The twice forty i.e. eighty acres of land donated by Kalikkāma constitute a separate hamlet now known as Panniruvēli, which is now under Anbanāthapuram Vagaiyarā charities of Māyūram.

Kuṇḍaiyūr Kiḻār is one of the devotees who figure in the life of St. Sundarar. This Vēḷāḷar, had been supplying the required rice to the household of Paravai, the spouse of Sundara at Tiru-Arur. According to the Tirukkōḷili Ulā written some ten centuries later, Kuṇḍaiyūr Kiḻār was a Kārkāṭṭār (Kārāḷar).

8. THE ŚAIVA ĀCĀRYAS

Meykanḍār : Tradition has it that Meykanḍār was himself a Kārkāttār. He was the son of Achutha Kaḷappāḷar of Pennāgaḍam. He was himself born through the grace of Śiva enshrined at Tiru-veṇkāḍu and was named Svētāvanapperumāḷ which is the name of the Lord there. He wrote the Śivajñāna Bōdham, which is the basic original scripture of the Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy. The aged Śivācārya, Sakalāgama Paṇḍita was his first disciple and he came later to be known as Aruḷ-Nandi. From Meykaṇḍār, the school of Śaiva Siddhanta evolved itself into a new school of theistic Advaita philosophy.

Today, Pennāgaḍam, the ancestral town of Meykaṇḍār is one of the important centres where the Kārkāttār live in large numbers. Meykaṇḍār came of the Kaḷappāḷa gōtra there. The Kaḷappāḷar are quite different from Kaḷabhrās. The town is situated in the South Arcot district; there is a large temple there built by Kōccengat Coḷa of the 5th century A. D. This has been sanctified in the hymns of Appar and Sambandhar in the 7th century.

The Śaiva Mutts

Tiru-Āvaḍuturai : The Tiruvāvaḍuturai mutt was established in the 15–16th century by Namaśivāyamūrti, a Kārkāṭṭār disciple of

Siddhar Śivaprakāśa of Mūvalūr, coming in the line of Meykaṇḍār. Siddhar Śivaprakāśa was a disciple of Aruḷ Namaśivāya, who was a disciple of Saint Umāpati, the fourth Santāna-āchārya and the author of many literary and philosophical works.

Dharmapuram: The Dharmapuram mutt was founded in the 16th century at Dharmapuram by Guru Jñānasambandha, disciple of Kamalai Jñānaprakāsa of Tiru Ārur. He was a Kārkāttār, hailing from Srivilliputtūr in the far south. Namaśivāyāmūrti has not left any writing; but Guru Jñānasambandha has written many works on the various pathways of Śaivism.

These two mutts have been flourishing in all their spiritual glory to this day. Illustrious heads and disciples had adorned these two mutts, and they had written quite a large number of Tamiḻ literary works as well as exegetical treatises and devotional poems on Śaivism.

Sūryanārkoil: It was founded by Śivāgra Yōgi in the 16th century. The Yōgi was a Brahmin and his successors for some generations were Brahmins. In the early 18th century, the head of the mutt was suffering from a dire disease and no one would go near him. At that time, one Subrahmanya Piḷḷai of Tirumānduṛai, a Kārkāttār village next to Sūryanār-koil, was an ardent disciple of the Āchārya. He did all the menial services to him to the last moment, patiently ministering to all the physical needs of the sick Acharya. Moved by his devotion and dedicated service and also by his erudition in the Śaiva Siddhānta philosophic lore, the Āchārya made him the next head.[1] Subrahmanya Śivāgra Yōgi as he was now called gave all his family property (then about one hundred acres of wet land) to the mutt. This was held by the Kārkāttār after him till the middle of the 19th century, when the famous Mēlagaram Subrahmanya Paṇḍara Sannidhi of Tiruvavāḍuturai annexed it.

1. This story was narrated to the author by the late Aruḷmigu Meenākṣisundara Dēsigar, Head of the Sūryanārkoil Mutt.

This indicates the Kārkāttār had been great philosophers and religious heads and three large mutts on the banks of the Kāvēri were founded and headed by them.

9. PRECEPTORS OF THE KĀRKĀTTĀR

The Kārkāttār in the Coḷa territory generally owe their allegiance in the matter of spiritual following to the Śaiva mutts at Sūryanārkōil, Tiru Āvaḍuturai and Dharmapuram.

But later, Kanjanūr Ayyars have been supplying this need. They are today a large group of several families domiciled in Tukili and Kanjanūr, on the northern bank of the Kāvēri, a little to the east of Āḍuturai in Tañjavūr district. They had originally been part of the Dīkṣitar community in Cidambaram. They had been accepted as preceptors for several centuries by all Kārkāttār in the Coḷanād. They claim all the Kārkāttār as their disciples and collect an annual *mānya* (or gift) from them. They officiate as priests, at all the auspicious ceremonies; they also officiate at the funeral rites, after the corpse is disposed of. (A Śaiva Dēsikar officiates as priest on the occasions of death, for the removal of the body and, for the second day's rites). They also assume spiritual leadership by imparting Dīkṣa (spiritual initation) and teaching Śiva pūja to the disciple. They are no doubt Tamilians but they are all total strangers to Tamiḻ and perform all the rites only in Sanskrit. Their knowledge of the Sanskrit language today is almost nil; but having learnt the mantras and the kriyas by word of mouth from father to son, they go on repeating them by rote. Beyond this, most of them know neither religion nor philosophy.

They are also to be classed as Śivācāryas. The Śaivas are enjoined to perform Atmārtha Śiva pūja in their houses. Śiva pūja on Āgamic lines is not the duty of Smārtha Brahmins. So the Smārtha Brahmins are not competent to be preceptors to these Śaivas. For a Śaiva who is competent to perform Ātmārtha Śiva pūja, the preceptor should be naturally from a higher Śiva class (not caste). Hence only the Śivācārya has the competence to act as preceptor to a Śaiva.

10. RELIGIOUS PERSUASION

The Kārkāttār community is predominantly Śaiva; yet there are a good number of families which are the followers of Viṣṇu. But there is no distinction among the families on this account in the matter of marriage and similar social relationship. The religious persuasion can be seen only from the religious mark on the forehead. It is common for Śaivas among them to have Vaiṣṇava names and for Vaiṣṇavas to have Śaiva names.

The position is different as far as the south is concerned. All the Paṇḍinād Kārkāttār are the followers of Śiva; there is not a single family there which calls itself Vaiṣṇava. But in Çoḷanād these Vaiṣṇavas being so very small, among a larger population, it do not hesitate to inter marry in the Śaiva families.

All the Kārkāttār, up to the first quarter of this century, were performing Ātmārtha Śiva pūja (personal worship of Śiva) in their houses. In large villages of Kārkāttārs, we can yet find ghats on the Kāvēri and the local tank, wherein platforms, sandal grinding stones and water courses had been constructed providing places for a few people to prepare their own sandal paste and perform their pūja at the same time. Close to the tanks are yet found floral gardens (Nanda Vanam), which are distinct from temple flower gardens, wherefrom they can gather flowers for pūja offering. These gardens were religiously maintained by the Kārāttār on private land for the use of those doing Śiva pūja. This arrangement was necessary because the devotees were strictly prohibited from gathering flowers from temple gardens for private pūja.

Speaking of Çoḷanād, which is the centre of the Kārkāttār community, we may add that four groups had been recognized by the Kārkāttār as orthodox Śaiva groups. They are: (a) the Kārkāttār where-ever they may be found; (b) the Toṇḍaimaṇḍala Vēḷāḷar; (c) the Śaiva Chettiyār known as Kāsukkaḍai Chettiyār and Sōlapuram Chettiyār in the Māyūram, Kuttalam and Kumbakōnam areas; and (d) Sōḷiya Vēḷāḷar in certain limited localities around Pandanallūr, Aṇakkuḍi and Tiruvārur in Tanjāvūr district. These four groups are considered to have been vegetarians

from very ancient times and to preserved their own individual cultures. The elders in these communities had all been performing Ātmārtha Śiva pūja till the first half of this century. They freely inter-mingle and dine but never inter-marry.

All the four communities never dine with any other community for the simple reason, that however ardently the others may follow the Śaiva religion and worship Śiva, one could never be sure that the others were vegetarians from the ancient past. As is well known, many families have taken to vegetarianism in the recent past, out of conviction, but the Vēlāḷar mentioned above would not dine with them at a common table.

One trait of the Kārkāttār may be noted here. They paid due homage to the devotees of Śiva. Besides, the Kārkāttār showed the greatest reverence to the symbols of Śiva, the sacred ash, the rudrākṣa beads and the Panchākṣara. They smeared the ash on the prescribed occasions, they wore at least one rudrākṣa bead framed in gold round their neck and, on initiation, never failed to utter the Panchākṣara (five letters) mantra in the prescribed manner.

We have said that the Kārkāttār all lived round temples. Their personal names generally took after the names of Śiva and Śakti enshrined in the local temple. Round Cidambaram, names of male members were like Natarāja, Ambalavāṇa, Kanakasabhai, Ponnambalam, and Kunjitapādam, which were all references to the presiding deity of Cidāmbaram. Women were always named as Śivakāmasundari. Around Vaidīsvaran Kōvil, it was always Vaidya-nātha (Śiva) and Muttaiyan and Muttukkumārasvāmi (Subrahmanya) for men, and Tayyalnāyaki (Śakti) for women. In Tiru Ānaikkā, it was always Jambuliṅgam or Appuliṅgam and Akhilāṇḍēsvari. Similarly in all the other places without exception, a child born in the Kārkāttār family was always given the local deity's name or the name of the grand-father or grand-mother without exception.

11. THE LITERARY HISTORY OF THE KĀRKĀTTĀR

A study of the growth of the literature on the Kārkāttār and the literature created by them is an interesting subject. Specific

mention of the Kārkāttār in Tamiḻ literature is available only from the second millennia after Christ. Poems referring to them and books written by them are available in the later centuries but not in the early period.

Again, *Ācārak-kōvai* sets us thinking. It is a book of one hundred verses laying down a code for disciplined and righteous living. The author is one Araiyanār of Munṟurai. We have shown earlier that the term *araiya* had come to be a gōtra title of the Kārkāttār. *Ācārak-kōvai* may well be the earliest poetic composition of the Kārkāttār.

Jñāna Sambandha on the Vēḷāḷar: Saint Tiru Jñānasambanda (early 7th century A. D.) when visiting Tiru-Ākkūr near Māyūram, sang a decad on the form of Śiva enshrined there, from which extracts are given below:

> "This is the temple of Śiva, the Tantonṟi māḍam,
> the raised temple of the Self-revealed One, where
> the hard working Vēḷāḷar abide in large numbers,
> they who are renowned for their munificence." (verse 3)

> "Their nature is not to say no to those who go to
> them through poverty, but to derive joy through
> giving to them." (verse 9)

Sambandha seems to make here two points; one is that the Vēḷāḷar is a race of hard-working people (working on the land) and two that they are renowned for their giving and that they never say 'no' to the indigent. It may be mentioned that almost all Vellalars in the area are Kārkāṭṭārs.

12. EMINENT KĀRKĀTTĀR POETS

From very early times, we know there have been many reputed poets in the country who had written poems large and small. Later we have definite mention of the Kārkāṭṭār writers. We shall mention below some of the great writers who have enriched the Tamiḻ literature through their contribution, in later periods.

Saint Meykaṇḍār: Meykaṇḍār of the Kaḷāppāḷa gotra was not only the first codifier of the Śaiva Siddhānta system of Advaita philosophy and first spiritual preceptor of the Śaiva fold, but was also a poet. He wrote the Tamil *Śivajñāna Bōdham* in Tamil, which is hailed as the very essence and fragrance of the ghee which is extracted out of the milk namely the Vedas. Its sūtras have been translated into Sanskrit and have been given out as extracts from the Raurava Āgama.

Meykaṇḍār is the originator for all Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy in South India and for almost all the Śaiva Mutts here. He lived in the 12-13th centuries.

Kāvai Ambalavāṇa Tambirān: There was one Ambalavāṇa-t-tambirān at Tiru Ānaikkā by the end of the 14th century. He came of the direct line of St. Umāpati. He himself had written many exegectical treatises; his short treatises on yōga have been printed. His lineage is traceable in both ways—through his natural descendants and through his spiritual descendants. He was a Kārkāttār; Kāvai Vaḍamalaiyappa Piḷḷaiyan of the Tiruchendūr incident seems to have been a natural descendant from him after a period of about two centuries. His spiritual descendants number many well known figures. One lived a little later as the disciple of Veḷḷiambalavāṇa Tambirān who was a disciple of Saint Kumara Gurupara and wrote illustrative verses for the Siddhānta Śāstra, *Tiruvaruṭpayan* of Sri Umāpati Śivam.

Guru Jñānasambandha: He is one of the Āchāryas coming in a direct line of master and disciple, from Meykaṇḍar. He has written about ten works on the Śaiva school of philosophy, poems on yōga subjects such as the *Prāsādaṣaṭgam* and *Tiripaḍārtha-rūpādi agaval.* He was the founder of the Dharmapuram Mutt. His *magnum opus* the *Jñānābharaṇa Viḷakkam,* a metrical elaboration of. *Śivajñāna Siddhiyār* in a large number of verses, seems to have been lost; only a fragment of it is available. The most popular among his works is the *Śivabhōgasārana,* essence of God experience, which is poetry of a high order. Guru Jñānasambandha was a Kārkāṭṭār hailing from Srivilliputtūr, in the latter half of the 16th century.

Haridāsa: Haridāsa of the first half of the 16th century was a Vaiṣṇava poet. He was held in high esteem in the Vijayanagar court of Krishnadēvarāya. He was one of four brothers, and the son of Tiruvēṅkaḍamuḍaliyār. He belonged to the Kaḷappāḷa gōtra. He wrote a long poem by name *Iru Samaya Viḷakkam* in 2119 verses, wherein he discusses the doctrines of both Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism and seeks to establish that the latter is superior. He lived in Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam; his father and brother held high administrative posts under the Vijayanagar rulers.

Saiva Ellappa Nāvalar: He was an illustrious poet of the later half of the 16th century. He was of the Kāliṅgarāya gōtra, hailing from a village near Tiru-veṇkāḍu. His descendants still live in the same place. He has sung six purāṇas of which *Aruṇāchalam*, *Sevvandi* and *Veṇkaḍu* are well known. Besides, he wrote many minor poems such as the *Tiru Aruṇaik-kalambakam* and *Tiru-Ārūrk-kōvai.* His commentary on the Tamiḻ *Soundaryalahari* of Kavirājapaṇḍita (translated from Sankarāchārya's Sanskrit poem) is an important contribution to the Śakta literature in Tamiḻ.

Irasai Vaḍamalayappa Piḷḷaiyan: The story of Vaḍamalaiyappa has been given in detail separately. The senior Vaḍamalaiyappa was a chief under Tirumalai Nāyak who restored the Subrahmanya image in the Tiruççendūr temple. Tirumalai-koḻundupiḷḷaiyan was his son and successor to the post. He was also celebrated in literature. Two kuṛaḷ veṇba poems have been sung glorifying him. Kuṛaḷ veṇba is a poem in which a Kuṛaḷ is incorporated as the last two lines of each veṇba while the first two lines give a story to illustrate the thought expressed in the Kuṛaḷ. The poems were known as *Tirumalai veṇba* and *Tirumalaik-koḻundu veṇba*; only some fragments of the poems are now available.

Irasai Veḍamalaiyappa Piḷḷaiyan was grandson of the illustrious grand-father. He was not only an administrator and a patron of men of letters but was also an eminent poet. Two purāṇas written by him are now available in print. *Machcha-purāṇa* (a translation of Matsya-purāṇa in Sanskrit) is a long purāṇa of over 5000 verses written in 1706; he had also written the *Niḍūr stala purāṇa* in about 400 verses. The two books are classical poems written

in a good style and testify to the author's poetic skill and to his devotion to Śiva. A translation of the Matsya purāṇa requires a profound knowledge of the Sanskrit language, which the author had.

Apart from his own writings, we find there was no poet of any repute in the period who did not sing on this Vaḍamalayappan. Ratnakavirāyar junior had written the *Pulavarāṟṟuppadai* in praise of him. *Mukkūḍal paḷḷu* extolls him.

Subramaṇia Munivar: Subramaṇia Munivar of Toṭṭikkalai was a renowned poet of the recent past. He lived round 1800 A.D. He was a disciple of Śivajñāna swāmi, disciple of Tiru-Āvaḍuturai Mutt and author of the famous *Śivajñāna bōdhamā bhāṣyam.* The Munivar has written many minor poems like *Kalasaik-kōvai, Kalasai-sleḍai veṇba, Tiru-Āvaḍuturaik-kōvai* etc. He was born in the Pūnuḍa gōtra in Kaṭṭumannārkōil.

Siṟṟambala Aiyā: He was in the court of Raghunātha Sētupati in Ramnad and wrote *Maruḍūrp-purāṇam.*

Murugaiyyak-kavirāyar: He was a poet of the early 19th century. He hailed from the Mullaikkuḍa gōtra. Along with another poet, Nalla kavirāyar, he was responsible for enlarging the Villibhāratam of about 3000 verses into the *Nallāppiḷḷai Bhāratam* of over 16,000 verses.

Mahāvidvan Mīnakṣisundaram Piḷḷai: The name of Mahāvidvan Mīnākṣisundaram Pillai in the recent past is very well known. His ancestors though settled in Tiruchi, originally hailed from Madurai. They belonged to the Vayaluḍa gōtra. Dr. Swaminatha Aiyar, the most illustrious disciple of Piḷḷai has written his biography in two volumes of about 700 pages. This biography, the first and easily the best in the language, became instantly famous. Piḷḷai has written about 100 poems, large and small and they comprise a total of 20,000 verses. The life of Pillai (1815-1876) is a literary history of the 19th century. The illustrious Karkāttār of Kalyāṇasōḷapuram—Śivachidambaram Piḷḷai, Aiyāṟu Piḷḷai and Aruṇāchalam Piḷḷai had extended their generous patronage to

Minākṣhisundaram Piḷḷai and had influenced him to write the short purāṇas of Attūr, Vilathoṭṭi, Kuṛukkai, Maṇṇippaḍikkarai and Vāḻoḷiputtūr, besides the large purāṇas as Māyūram and Tirutturuṭṭi (Kuttālam).

This list does not exhaust the list of Kārkāttār men of letters of renown. There were many minor poets upto the present day. The above is only an illustrative selection.

13. LITERATURE ON THE KĀRKĀTTĀR

It has been pointed out that the Kārkāttār had always been givers and never receivers. They pined for the grace of Śiva and in token thereof would receive only the sacred ash from the temple priest. Naturally this characteristic earned for them the praise of all poets in the land through the centuries. We shall give here one verse praising the munificience of their hand.

> "This is the hand that guides the plough,
> that is looked up to by the mighty princes,
> that wears the ring (śudarśana chakra)
> and distributes grace,
> that wards off evil, the hand that is eternal.
> that gives support for all time -
> the hand of the Kāralar."

Below we refer to some of the poems which speak of the benevolence and greatness of the Kārkāttār.

Ēr-eḻupadu: This is one of the earliest poems in praise of the Kārkāttār and their agricultural operations. It contains seventy-nine verses eulogising the community, its various operations, the agricultual implements and their parts. Its refrain is, that there is none equal to the Kārkāttār in the entire universe and that it is only the agriculturist's plough that feeds the whole universe; of course this is always true. Incidentally it also praises the Cōḻa as the monarch who possesses this amount af agricultural wealth. The poem is attributed to Kambar; this Kambar in a second poet bearing the illustious name of the author of the Rāmāyaṇa; he would have lived in the 12th century.

Tirukkai vaḻakkam: Usually printed as an appendix to the first poem, this is a long kaliveṇba poem in 118 lines. It celebrates the various achievements of the hand of the *Kārāḷar*. The whole poem is full of allusions to the earlier legends beginning from *Periyapurāṇam*. The reference to Kambar, Sēkkiḻār, Oṭṭakkūttar, Naladiyār and Sadayappa Vaḷḷal are of course valuable. It seems to lend support to the legend that the Jain work Nālaḍi was written by the Vēḷāḷar.

Kārāḷar Kiḷai Vaḷappamālai: This is a long kaliveṇba poem having 360 lines, celebrating the glory of the ancient Kārkāttār and ending with the achievements and various acts of public benefit of the two Vaḍamalayappas. The author is one Śaṅkaraliṅgam, The poem gives the name of the community as Kāraikkāttār (which is the same as Kārkāttār, kārai being the noun *kār*, with the second case ending. He says that the number of gōtras (clans) in the community is 96 and that they all end with the suffixes like rāya, uḍai, tirai and kuḍai. The poem gives the ten insignia for royalty for the Kārkāttār: hill—Podigai; river—Vaigai; kingdom—Maṅgala nāḍu; place (*ūr*)—Mēlnāḍu—mathūr; flower—lily (kuvaḷai); horse—that of victory; elephant—that which conquers the dig-gajas; banner—plough; drum—the legendary three, of victory, giving and marriage; command—the One sound.

Vēḷāḷar Ammānai: This seems to have been an ammanai poem probably on the model of the Mūvar Ammānai, glorifying the Kārāḷar. Except for one verse cited in the Toṇḍa-maṇḍala Satakam, the poem does not seem to be extant.

The Maṇḍala Satakam Poems

There are about seven Satakam poems in Tamiḻ which seek to glorify one region in particular, its land, people, heroes, poets and the like. All these could be placed between the 17th and the 19th centuries. They were all written at a time when many purāṇas and similar books were written in verses all over the Tamiḻnādu seeking to extol one community or the other. Of the seven, five appear to be written solely for glorifying the Vēḷāḷar. We shall say a few words about each of them here. Each Satakam, as the name signifies, has one hundred verses, each verse ends

with a phrase mentioning the region as Toṇḍaimaṇḍalamē, Paṇḍimaṇḍalamē and so on. Except the Cōlamaṇḍala Satakam which is in the six-foot viruttam metre, the others are in the difficult Kaṭṭaḷaik-kalitturai metre. Though the Satakams profess to extol the region in general, we find them extolling principally only the Vēḷāḷar community, and some, the Kārkāttār community. Another feature of the poems is that very ofen they claim some renowned writers as belonging to their own region.

Kārmaṇḍala Satakam: This is a poem in 100 verses, which seeks to extol the Kārkāttār community and the region which that community inhabited. The poem deals at length with the glories of the Kārmaṇḍalam, the Dasāṅgam of the community, its vocations in life, its history, the Gaṅgai kulam, its religion, eminent persons of the community and their contributions to art and letters: The author is said to be one Āṛai-kiḻar of Avinaśi. His date has been given as 1025–1070. The appendix to the poem gives a biographical note on about twenty-five chiefs and poets of the Saṅgam period, who were Kārkāttār. In another appendix, it gives a list of one hundred gōtra titles. The book however, cannot be taken to be authentic. It could have been written only in the nineteenth century or later, after Satakam poems like the Toṇḍamaṇḍala Satakam had gained popularity.

Paṇḍimaṇḍala Satakam: This poem of 100 verses extols the Paṇḍimaṇḍalam and the ancient patrons and poets who had lived in that territory. It is attributed to one Aiyamperumāḷ of Madurai. The poem says the author wrote it to glorify the southern Kāraikāttār. Many legends are mentioned herein. But all of them are not authentic.

Other works may make occasional reference to the Kārkāttār. Some recent tracts have been published on the history and traditions of the Kārkāttār.

14. THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE KĀRKĀTTĀR

The Kārkāttār have always been agriculturists, both actual tillers and well-to-do owners of large farms where many also did

the actual tilling work (called in Tamil books *uḻutunpōr* and *uḻuvittuṇpōr* respectively) and they practised farming as their *kula-dharma* (sacred duty). They never engaged themselves in any other avocation in life. They never engaged themselves in trade nor ever gone abroad on any business or other errands. The two instances menticned elsewhere in this article, of Kārkāttār being employed by Vaḍamalaiyappa Piḷḷaiyan as village karṇam and some others of Kumbakōṇam engaging themselves in trade, are rare exceptions dating back to the 17th and the 19th centuries respectively.

When the Non-Brahmin movement was started in Tamiḻnādu after the first world war, the Kārkāttār were attracted by the glamour of the petty government jobs and also identified themselves with the non-descript term Non-Brahmin. This ultimately reduced them to the state of an economically Backward Class, even within the space of a quarter of a century.

We shall give below a few important features from the social history of the Kārkāttār.

Status of Women

Women among this community enjoyed most privileges and rights. They inherited property, were guardians for minor children and administrated property in the best interests of the minor. They had expert knowledge in all matters relating to agriculture as also religious matters and matters connected with wedding alliances and arrangements, in which they had full freedom. They were all models of chastity and modesty even by the most conservative standards; the always sought seclusion both in the home and in public. But yet they were in their homes, hospitable to visitors, kind and generous to servants, obedient to elders, thrifty in money matters, and capable in bringing up their children. They were always a source of pride for their husbands and their men folk. They were truly the lustre of the home.

In the Kārkāttār community there was no child marriage. Widows were not required to shave their heads and to cover

them. Older widows always dressed in white, while younger widows dressed in red; generally no other coloured sari was used by them. (Married women and young girls never wore white dress in the past). They never wore any jackets. A widow would smear white ash or put on the *rudrākṣa* beads, but she would not put on the *kumkum* (vermillion mark), and would not use turmeric; nor wear jewels. On the death of her husband, the *tāli* and *pili* were removed from her. But it should be stated that the widow had an honoured place in Kārkāttār society; she was not despised. She would not take a direct part in any auspicious function in the family; that was her only handicap. In a traditionally conservative and cultural family, once a woman became a widow, living conditions and the social set up were such that she turned her thoughts god-w rd and led a life of penance thereafter. She was a privileged member of her husband's family, influencing all its activites and selflessly serving the children and the adults in the joint family. Her life was not one of sorrow and denial, but one of joyous sacrifice, dedication, and service. As the years passed, she was always looked up to for advice and guidance in all matters in the family. Divorce in such a society was unheard of.

Female Children

The Kārkāttār exercised the greatest caution in the matter of bringing up their female children. Girls of the adolescent age and, before the period of puberty. are never allowed to stay away from the mother. Attainment of puberty is a great family event. The Kārkāttār like every other cultured society in the Tamiḻnādu in the past, used to celebrate it with great pomp. In this they are not different from others. All the relatives and friends of the house visit her and bless her. The main purpose of the celebrations seems to be to acquaint community members that the girl is available for a marrige alliance. Naturally parents with eligible boys would be interested in the girl. They could see her at the time of this festivity and decide whether she could be considered a suitable match for their ward. In the context of the custom that she cannot be seen by male members after this celebration, this kind of publicity in the community seems to have full relevance. We shall

note next, a general custom regarding the seclusion of girls who have attained puberty.

Il-Seṟittal

Among all the cultured classes of society in Tamiḻnādu generally, all boys and girls play together and move freely, when they are children. When a girl comes of age, her movements are immediately restricted. This is mentioned in classical literature as *il-seṟittal* (restraining with in the four walls of the house). The girl is not permitted to move with other men except her immediate kith and kin, such as father and brothers. Even in the social functions in her own house, she moves in such a way that she is not seen by the other male members. There was a particular custom in Kārkāttār society to indicate the presence of such a girl in the house and to restrain, not the girl, but outsiders from entering of the house at will. Usually all members of society respect the custom of restraint placed upon a girl who has attained puberty; (of course this restraint is removed the moment she is married). In that house, two figures of calves are placed at the entrance gate, on pillars on the outer verandah, or on the parpet wall of the roof, etc. This is a sign that there is a unmarried girl in the house who had come of age and a caution that the visitors should not freely go into the house but should stop at the outer verandah and may enter only with permission. The figure of calves was made in burnt clay by the local potter and coloured white. Visitors, be they relations, friends, equals, or servants, stopped at the first verandah and stepped in, only when invited inside.

Tiruviḷakkiḍutal ceremony: The one ceremony or family ritual which distinguishes the Kārkāttār from any other community is the Tiruviḷakkiḍutal (or the Tiruvilakeṟṟutal) ceremony. Viḷakkiḍutal means lighting a lamp. This ceremony takes place for a girl, at the age of seven or nine, at any rate before she comes of age. This is a very grand function, second perhaps only to the marriage function. This is itself called the *viḷakkiḍu-kalyaṇām*. It consists simply of the maternal uncle of the girl tying a small golden chain (necklace) or a cotton thread with coral and golden balls on

it, round the neck of the child. On the appointed auspicious day all the friends and relations of the family assemble. *Poṅgal* is cooked and served on five or seven leaves in front of the family deity, invoked in a handful of sand in the ritual yard. The child is seated on a special seat or dais and the uncle sits by her side. The necklace or string has an *amman kāsu* (round piece of gold like a coin on which an image of Śakti is stamped) in the centre flanked by corals and gold balls on either side. After the child performs a *kriya* for the deity, he ties it round the neck of the child. This is called a *Kudaichamaṇi*; also called *navatāli.* The child holds a small lighted lamp in her hands and, with this she walks round the invoked deity and the food offerings. If she is five years of age, she goes round five times; if she is seven, she goes round seven times and so on. As usual there is a feast afterwards. She is supposed to wear this constantly till the day of her real marriage, when this is removed and the *Tirumāṅgalya* is tied by the bridegroom. But actually children do not wear it; they take it away as soon the function is over.

During the *Poṅgal* festival, special lamps for each of girls, for whom this ritual has been performed, are placed along with the family lamps placed for worship. Besides, during Poṅgal, when presents and, lamp wicks soaked in ghee are received by a mother from the house of her parents, special wicks are also received on behalf of each such girl for lighting and worship.

The *Viḷakkiḍu kalyāṇam* has been a very important family ritual for the Kārkāttār till very recently. There seems to be a legend behind this custom. Long ago, there was a ruler in the area who made it a habit of snatching away all unmarried young girls who had come of age. He never molested married girls. Some communties in the land were willing to sacrifice some girl so that the rest of the community may be free form any harm. The Kārkāttār however were not willing to sacrifice any girl in this manner. So they invented this practice of performing this pseudo-marriage function by which all girls were made to *look* like married girls, because of the *Kudaichamaṇi* round their neck.

This gave them immunity from molestation. The *Pāṇḍimaṇḍala Satakam* (perhaps of the 18–19th century) refers to this custom among the Kārkāttār and says that because the *Panḍiya* prince claimed a girl for a bride, the unwilling Kārkāttār invented this practice of tying the *maṇi*, before a large gathering of relatives.

The ceremony is common to the Kārkāttār of the north and the south but the days of its observance are different. In Paṇdinād they perform it on the Poṅgal day. Friends and relatives witness the function and return to their own homes for celebrating the Poṅgal in their homes. A feast is held in the girl's house on the next day, the Māṭṭuppoṅgal day. But the practice in Çoḷanād is different. Māṭṭuppoṅgal also is equally important for them, and, their kith and kin from afar cannot come and return on the Poṅgal day nor can they attend on the Māṭṭuppoṅgal day. Hence the ceremony is fixed on some other auspicious day convenient for all concerned.

The Kārkāttār gōtras: Each Kārkāttār family has a distinct *gōtra*. In all social functions this gotra is invariably mentioned—particularly in marriages the gotra has prominence. *Sa-gōtra* (same gōtra) inter-marriage is prohibited. Mention of the *gōtra* in marriage invitations is usually an indispensable feature even to this day.

The *gōtra* is simply a family name indicating the particular branch from which the present families were descended. Other communities seek to trace their origin to a Rishi. But the Kārkāttār do not trace their origin to a Rishi but to one of two classes—a place or an illustrious ancestor. All the gōtras of the Kārkāttār of the present day trace their origin only to one of the two. Examples of place names are - Agamuḍa, Māyaluḍa, Orattuḍa, Vilanduḍa, Pūvanuḍa, Sāṭtukkuḍa, Sāttanuḍa, Aiyaluḍa are just a few of such gōtras; *ḍa* suffix is a corruption for *uḍaiya*; Māyaluḍa is for Māyalūr-uḍaiya; Sāṭtanuda is for Sāṭtanūr-uḍaiya; Sāṭtukkuḍa is for Sāttukkuḍal-uḍaya and so on.

The second type in gōtra names is associated with names of lilustrious ancestors.

Kārkāttār reached the pinnacle of their glory under the Cola emperors. Evidence of this is seen in the many *gōtra* names which have been handed down through the ages. They were all commanders and military chiefs and administrators. Such names as Sembiya araya indicates their position as chiefs; *araya* means literally, king or chief; sembiya is a title of the Cola. Other titles such as Pandiyarāya, Pancava taraya, Tennava taraya, Mīnava taraya, Valudirāya indicate the victories they had over the Pandiyas. All these are Pandiya names. Malavarāya signifies their victory over the Mālava chiefs; Villavarāya and Vanavarāya over the Cēras (Villava and Vānava mean Cēra); Kongarāya over the battles in the Kongu country; Vāṇādirāya against the Bāṇas; Kālingaraya indicates their participation in the two compaigns against the Kalingas taken out under Kulōttunga Cola I, by his son Vikrama and by his illustrious commander Karuṇākara Toṇḍaimān, round 1100 A.D. Pallavarāya, Vilup-pataraya, Munaiya taraya and similar titles have all associations with the history of the royal houses and of the Cola territory. Some titles such as Vijayarāya, Achutarāya, Sēnādhirāya, Seviya-taraya and Kanakarāya do not seem to have any particular significance, but appear to be titles of a general importance. Seenat-taraya might have been one conferred on a warrior who had then been to China as an emissary or ambassador of the Cola.

It may be noted that all the *gōtra* names are only Tamil names and do not have any Sanskrit rishi name among them.

There is an early mention of 64 gōtras. The editor of *Kār-maṇḍala Satakam* has taken pains to collect a list of 100 *gōtra* titles under the heads 'lords, earls, dukes and Viceroys'. These are repeated in another book, with an alphabetical arrangement. However it is found that in reality there are many more *gōtras*. The classification as Lords, Dukes, etc. is all mere fiction.

Family Life

The Kārkattār lived as a joint family. The elders always had the unquestioning obedience of others. All marriages were arranged by the elders, mostly within near relations, having always an

eye on social status. Though economic status did have a consideration, social status was respected. Members of one *gōtra*, however distant they may be, considered themselves as one family in such matters as weddings, bereavement, worship of *kula-dēvatas* and performance of temple festivals.

Description of family relation are peculiar to the Kārkāttār. *Maithuni* (corrupted as *machini*) is a common term applied to wife's sister, maternal uncle's daughter or paternal aunt's daughter. Two other terms are very meaningful. They are *Arumaiyār* for an elder brother's wife and *Varisaiyār* for the husband's sister are in common use. *Arumaiyār* is one, deserving all felicitation; a brother's wife is a new comer into the family and so deserves all consideration and felicitation and hence she is called *Arumaiyār*. The husband's sister is a lady who is going away to some one else's house, and so she is entitled to all presents from here; she is called *Varisaiyār* (Varisai—present), by her brother's wife. These two terms are in common use in the Kārkattār family. A brother's wife is never called *aṇṇi*, as in some other communities.

The servants in a household have a special term by which they address the lady of the house. A Kārkāttār lady is always addressed as *Āchi*; a Soliya Vēḷāḷa lady is always called *Āyi*; and a Mudaliyār lady is called *aṇṇi*. The words mean only one thing and it cannot be confused with another. From the mode of address by a servant, we can easily understand to which community the lady belongs.

Every cultured community in the past had its own individual way of dress. The Kārkāttār also had their own mode of dress. Men after a certain age always dressed themselves with a 'Mūlaik-kacham'. This was not in the Brahmin mode, but in a mode altogether different. Their upper cloth on normal occasions consisted of a small towel only. Women dressed in a characteristic way, but not in the orthodox Brahmin way; it was just a dignified way, with a thick *kosavam* on one side; their *sarī* was eight yards in length.

Food

The Kārkāttār, as the real producers of food, were highly naturally cultured in the matter of food. Their food was always served on tender plantain leaf, spread with its tip end to the left. There is an artistic manner of serving the dishes on the leaf, which could be appreciated and understood only by sitting at the table. This culture of serving and eating is still preserved in the villages and could be seen only in small private functions. The false hybrid culture of the city has invaded the hearth of the Kārkāttār also and their individual table culture and manners are gradually being given up.

There are many dishes which are peculiar to this community. To give one example. There is one dish called *Poritha-kuḻambu* a kind of vegetable sauce prepared with all kinds of vegetables without the use of tamarind, some thing like Kooṭṭu of the modern city cuisne, but far different from it, and more deliciously flavoured having a speciality of its own. The city cuisne employs a large quantity of anise for all its preparations; the use of this anise and the like, compensates for all the bad odours, and, the lack of odour also, in the modern hotel. The Kārkāttār equate this with non-vegetarian preparations and never so much as touch it. They do not generally use any flavouring ingredients other than green coriander leaves; the very manner of preparing the dishes itself gives the correct flavour and fresh hue.

The Kārkārttār had evolved their own system of the thermos flask for keeping milk hot. The top half of an old mudpot was inverted, the bottom half placed on it and filled with paddy husk. This is ignited and the milk pot kept on it. The ignited husk will go on smouldering for twelve hours; it will not burn, nor will it die out. Thus the milk will be kept at the optimum temperature by a natural process and be ready at the required temperature at any part of the night. The modern thermos flask was then unknown and was unnecessary. Similarly in the summer months, a fresh mudpot kept water fresh and ice-cold.

The Kārkāttār food was simple but rich in nutrition. Vegetables and greens direct from the garden, milk direct from the cow

or the buffalo, and rice, hand-pounded without removal of the valuable coating of vitmain-bearing pericarp to be consumed. The average food consisted of three courses, first dhal and rice with ghee, second *kuḷambu* (sauce) and rice, and third curds and rice. Where the family could afford it, there was another middle course of *rasam* and rice. There were generally two side dishes of vegetables and pickles. This was quite a rich fare. Most people irrespective of whether they were rich or poor, had only cold rice in the mornings and again in the night; it was never thought beneath one's dignity to take cold rice. Ceremonial and festive dinners included more side dishes, two more varieties of sauces and *pāyasam* and *vaḍai* with fruits; there was no feast without *vaḍai* and *pāyasam.*

Elderly people observed a partial fast on days like the New-moon, Full moon and monthly Kārtikai; in the night they took only some frugal tiffin, perhaps a few plantain fruits and milk. All people had a course of milk in the night.

15. KĀRKĀTTĀR WEDDINGS

There is no sub-caste among Kārkāttārs in the entire community. So there is no difficulty in the matter of weddings between members of the different families, except that *sa-gōtra* marriages are not permitted. It is not uncommon for an young man to marry his sister's daughter; he is even considered to be the rightful bride-groom for her. The ages of the groom and bride had generally been 22–25 and 16-19 respectively; a difference of five years in age was always sought to be maintained. Marriages were all post-puberty ones. The newly wedded bride was always expected to step immediately into the rightful role of a responsible adult member of the large joint family of which her husband was a part. Monogamy was the general rule; occasionally other considerations, such as the barrenness of the first wife, caused the man to marry again even while the first wife was alive.

The Kārkāttār marriages were always arranged by the elders. It was celebrated in the house of bride-groom; to have it done in the house of the girl was considered not honourable. Times

were when the marriage was a four-days function; it was not just an alliance between two houses; it was virtually a great social event, calculated to bring together members of the community around the place. Horoscopes were usually compared; this was arranged by the maternal uncles of the bride and the bride-groom. The dowry system is a blot on Indian society today. In the grip of this octopus, we find today bride-grooms are daily sold at a price of so many thousands of rupees. Previously, the dowry system did not not show its head in the Kārkāttār alliance. Marriages were arranged not as a matter of barter, but as a form of honourable agreement between cultured equals.

A marriage function is even today the greatest social event in a rural community. It consists of a series of rituals. We shall consider them here under the three heads: Pre-marriage rituals, the actual wedding ceremony and the ceremonies attendant on pregnancy and child birth. Mere marriage itself was no ideal. The ideal was to procreate and continue the species. Like the Upaniṣadic seers and the most modern Vicar of Wake-field, our fore-fathers believed that the begetting of children was the greatest national service.

Pre-Marriage Ceremonies

Marriages were arranged for and performed, at leisure. The Kuṭumba Deiva puja (worship of family deity) is done several weeks ahead. The first important ritual after an alliance is decided upon (and dates fixed, orally) is, the *Pandalkāl-muhūrtam.* At an auspicious hour (fixed usually by the purōhit), the first post for the marriage pandal is erected after due ceremonies, by three sumaṅgalis (married ladies). It should be remembered that every small ritual is preceded by a puja for Ganēsa, called *anujñai,* which is in essence calculated to propitiate him and secure his blessing on the ritual following.

For every ritual beginning from the pandalkāl right up to the sending off of the bride and bride-groom to the bride's residence and receiving them back etc., the local orchestra always plays music. This party consists of the nāgasvaram (pipe player), Ottu (the tune player), tāḷam (cymbals) and periya mēḷam (drummer). There

is no auspicious ceremony without the piper's music. This will bear out the statement made else-where that the Kārkāttār were all patrons of music.

Muhūrta Ōlai

This is the next ritual; it is the writing of the agreement for marrying the particular girl to the boy concerned. This is written generally in the house of the bride; but according to the convenience of the parties, it may be done in the house of the bride-groom also. Close relatives and friends of both the parties are present. The purōhit writes up two different documents in red ink (formerly this was written on palm leaf, Ōlai, with a steel stylus), stating that each parent is willing to accept the girl or the boy as the bride or the bridegroom respectively of their son or daughter. The document is placed on a plate with sugar candy, flowers, fruits and sandal and, exchanged between the two parties. Usually, the date and hour of the wedding and the place are also specified therein. Music accompanies the ceremony. There is a sumptuous dinner. This ceremony sanctions the sending out of marriage invitations.

Niṣchayatāmbūlam (Betrothal)

This was formerly a separate ceremony. But to suit the convenience of all parties however, this is now done on the evening previous to the day of marriage, in the place of the marriage itself, mostly in a different house. The ceremony is also known as Nischayārtham, meaning that the proposal of marriage is now confirmed; this is sealed by the exchange of tāmbūlam (betels and arecanut) with large plates of flowers, candy, sugar and fruits. This is done in the house of the bride only. The fathers of the couple are seated on a mat in front of the purōhit who does a puja for anujñai. Members of both the parties are assembled in strength. The bride-to-be is brought by her maids and seated between the two. She is given a fresh silk sari and a jewel (as previously agreed upon) by the father of the bride-groom. The jewel is usually a sustantial present—a pair of golden bangles, a gold chain and the like. This commits both the parties, so that

thereafter they cannot evade the alliance. The girl goes to her room and comes back decked in the new dress and jewels. The purōhit makes a public announcement of the proposed marriage. The girl then bows to the elders of the assembly who bless her with *akshata* and *vibhūti* (sacred ash). The inescapable dinner follows.

The *parisam pōdutal* of many other communities corresponds to this *nischayatāmbūlam.*

Nāl-Virundu

On the day previous to the day of marriage, there is a special felicitation to the bride and the bride-groom in their houses in their respective places. A formal lunch is served at an auspicious hour; that is the occasion for him or her to receive presents and blessings from relatives. Nāl-virundu means feast for the (wedding) day. All relatives now assemble for the wedding and the party starts for the place of marriage. In the past, the places of the bride-groom and the bride were very rarely twenty miles apart; the parties travelled by bullock carts.

As soon as the bride's party arrives in the bride-groom's place, they are welcomed and lodged in a separate house. A procession is arranged from the local temple. Dinner in the night is very elaborate.

The Marriage Ceremony

In the past, marriages were often done in the early morning, between 3 a.m. and 6 a,m. This was because may inauspicious occurrences like rāhukālam or yamakandam, inauspicious yōgam etc. would not occur during the night period. But today most marriages are performed after breakfast, to suit the convenience of the new generation, which does not like to discipline itself to wake up before day break, to have a bath and to sit up for an hour or two without food, in order to witness the function.

The Place of Marriage

The marriage was celebrated usually, in the open yard at the centre of the house which is temporarily covered with cocount plai-

ting. A decorated dais is placed at its west, to face east. Paddy is spread on the dais, covered with a silken mat or carpet, on which the bride-groom and the bride will sit. The *purōhit* sits on a plank to the right facing east. On the verandah on the four sides of the court yard, relatives of both, men and women sit to witness the function.

There are many minor features in the marriage ceremony which have some importance. A series of new pots piled one on top of the other is placed by the potter in the centre of the yard to reach the roof of the *pandal*; so it is called *pandal-muṭṭi.* The pots are symbolically painted in white, yellow and red by the potter. At the bottom is a large pot open at the bottom and at the top which has the figures of the heads of the elephant, bull, horse, and lion carved on its sides to signify the presence of the patron deities of the four main quarters, Indra, Yama, Varuna and Kubhera, whose mounts they are. They symbolize the presence of the 33 classes of the celestials as witness for the marriage. Over this, are seven pots, which stand for the seven clouds for which the Kārkāttār stood surety before the Pāṇḍya at Madurai. A small pot filled with oil is kept burning from the beginning of the ceremonies to the very end, some times even for four days his all ceremonies are over. It is called the *kuḍaviḷakku*; it has a very thick wick which is supposed to be of 1000 strands; Indira is considered to be present there in token of his gratitude to the Kārkāttār for their part in the release of the clouds by the Pāṇḍya. Two large pots filled with water are placed on either side of the pandal muṭṭi.

The Ceremony Proper

In all ceremonies the male has precedence. The bride-groom is led in by the best man. As soon as the bride-groom sits on the dais, he is garlanded by the elders, men and women. Then he does the *ahujñai pūja. Kankaṇam* is the next ceremony. A piece of turmeric tied in a yellow-dyed cotton string is tied with due mantras on his right hand by his father (in some places, this is done by the purōhit). He then does a *pūja* for a *muhūrtakkāl,* called *arasāṇikkāl* placed at the north eastern corner of the yard; this is usually a

branch of the odina tree, branching into two at the top. Tying a piece of red cloth around the middle of the sapling is part of *pūja.* Then three sumaṅgalis and the bride-groom bring it to the centre tie it to the *pandal-muṭṭi.* Nine kinds of cereals and pulses made to sprout in a pot the previous day, are now brought and distributed into the seven (or nine) small earthern cups kept round the *araśaṇikkāl.* A *poṅgal* 'already cooked by the bride-groom's party, called as the *maṇappoṅgal,* is now served out on seven plantain leaves and offered to the *kāl* and the dēvatas. (The *poṅgal* is cooked in seven ovens in seven pots at the eastern end of the yard itself.) The offering is done by the bride-groom assisted by the *sumaṅgalis.* The offering consists of rice, ghee, jaggery, fruit and coconut and betel. New clothes which have received the blessings of the assembly are now given to the bride-groom who retires to his room for changing his dress. The bride is now brought in by the bride's maid.

Niṛai Nāḻi

The *Niṛai-nāḻi* is symbolic of the introduction of prosperity the Dhanalakshmi, Goddess of Wealth into the house by the young bride.

Niṛai-nāḻi is a very important ceremony. Just as the bride enters the house for the marriage ceremony, a *marakkāl* (brass or silver measuring vessel) filled with paddy, with a lighted silver lamp placed at the top-middle of the paddy is given in her hand, and she is escorted gently into the house by the mother-in-law. Great care is taken to ensure that the light does not flicker. This again is a symbol of the transfer of power from the mother-in-law to the daughter-in-law. She places the *niṛai-nāḻi* in the *pūja* room of the house, in front of the pictures or images, facing east, bows to them and then goes to the dais. The *niṛai nāḻi* is the most important symbol of the Kārkāttār to denote that they are the custodians of the industry of paddy cultivation. The bride then sits on the dais. (Every time the bride-groom or the bride go to the dais, they go round the *pandal-muṭṭi* in a clock-wise direction). She is then garlanded by the elders, men and women. She then offers a similar *maṇappoṅgal* already cooked and served as

before, to the *dēvatas*. She now receives the special wedding dress and retires to her room for change. The bride-groom now comes and occupies the dais. Then the bride comes into the yard with the wedding garland and garlands the bride-groom. He garlands her with another garland. She sits on his right. A plate of rice, coconut, betels and fruits are held out to her. She takes some rice and the other things on both of her hands; the bride-groom ties the *kaṅkaṇam* on the left hand of the bride.

The Tirumāṅgalya Dhāraṇa

The *purōhit* now lights the homa *agni*. The bride-groom performs a pūja for the *agni*. The important function of tying the Tirumāngalya now takes place.

The insignia of a married woman are *tāli* and *pīli*, the use of flowers, turmeric for bath and face-wash, and *kunkum* for the centre of the forehead. *Tāli* is the *Tirumāngalya*, a piece of small trinket tied round the neck of the bride by the bride-groom at the time of marriage. This becomes inseparable from her and is removed only at the time of her husband's death. It is supposed to bear the forms of the five weapons of Lord Viṣṇu the Protector—conch, discus, mace, bow and sword. The Kārkāttār's tāli is different in make from the Brahmin tāli; the latter is a flat piece, while the former is a round one.

Early in life the baby was decked with a little trinket bearing these insignia along with the real tiger's claws (or teeth); this was supposed to infuse courage and heroism in the child, both male and female. When the female child grew up and began to wear trinkets, this was got fixed up as the Tirumāngalya at the time of the marriage ceremony. The Kārkāttār wedding was always one of *pāṇi-grahaṇa*, *i.e.* clasping the hand of the girl by the bride-groom; *kannikā-dāna* was an integral part where the girl was freely gifted by her parents to the bride-groom, decked in jewels and flowers and with all the requirements for setting up a new house hold. The girl, holding flowers and akshata and cocount in her hands was gifted away to the bride-groom by her parents and the gift was received over the hand of the bride-groom by his

parents; in token thereof water was poured over the gift; this was known as *iṭṭu-nīr-vārttal* (*tārai vārttal*).

The *nāgasvaram* music plays continuously from early morning to the very end of the marriage. During important ceremonies, such as *kannikā dāna* and *Tirumāṅgalya dhāraṇa*, *geṭṭi-mēlam* (rapid sounding of all the instruments) is played to focus the attention of the whole assembly on the act and also to drown any inauspicious sounds such as sneezing.

Now the *purōhit* takes the *Tirumāṅgalyam* chain after obtaining the blessings of the elders and hands it over to the bride-groom. A bit of candy is given to the bride and the bride groom to be kept in the mouth, in order that they may have "sweet" memories of this most important moment. To the uttering of the mantras by the purōhit, the bride-groom ties the *Tirumāṅgalya* thread at the back of the girl's neck, by holding it with both hands and bringing is round her neck and places three knots on it and applies a little kumkum on the knots and on her fore-head. All the time the sister of the groom stands behind the couple, holding a lighted lamp on a plate, with flowers and betels. Senior members of the assembly throw *akshata* and flowers on the couple in token of their blessings. The sister's lighted lamp is the symbol for all future brightness in the life of the girl newly coming into the family and her bride-groom. In modern days a gold chain in generally used for the *Tirumaṅgalya*, but the thread is also there as a symbol, for tying the three knots, round the chain. Sandal, flowers, sugar and betels are distributed to all present in token of joy at the *Tirumāṅgalya dhāraṇa*.

Going Round the Fire

The marriage among all the higher classes is considered to be fully solemnized, not by the *Tirumāṅgalya* alone, but by three more rituals. The first is exchange of garlands. Immediately after tying of *mangalya*, the bride-groom and the girl exchange their garlands three times. The second is the *homa* fire which is fed by the *purōhit*. The girl's brother leads and the bride-groom and the bride follow clasping each other's hands, and they walk round the fire and the *pandal-muṭṭi* three times. Thirdly, the *purōhit* utters

the *sapta-pati* (Seven step) mantras. At the end of each round, all the three hold together some puffed rice in their hands jointly and feed the fire with it. This is done three times. On the last round, the ritual of *ammi* and *Arundathi* takes place. Towards the north-west of the central place a grinding stone is kept. The bride-groom coming here, lifts the right foot of the girl and places it on the stone; and asks her at the same time to look at the star Arundati in the sky, which is close to the star Vasishta in the Great Bear. This means that she should not be like Ahalya who was unable to retain her chastity for which aberration she was turned into a stone, but should be like Arundati, who was glorified in the firmament as a star on account of her chastity. At this time the bridegroom places a pair of silver rings called *meṭṭi* or pela, on the second toe of each foot of the girl.

After the three rounds, the bride returns and sits on the left of the bridegroom; hereafter his left is her place.

Short pieces of gold leaf are tied on the forehead of the bride by the maternal uncle, the bridegroom's mother and his sister. These are known as *paṭṭam*. The mother-in-law's *paṭṭam* is a sign of the transfer of power in the house to the new girl, who will hereafter assume headship in the house. The couple then prostrate before the elders and receive their blessings.

Nālam-Nīr

Pāli, or grains made to sprout the previous day, is consigned to the tank or a water course; this is called *pāli-viḍutal* or *nālam-nīr*; the couple receive on this occasion new clothes and all the presents from the bride's father are given at this time. This ceremony is now performed even close on the heels of marriage to suit the convenience of all persons including the bridegroom, who likes to go away to his work spot early. The wristlet of protection tied at the commencement of the marriage function on the hands of the couple is now detached and consigned to the water along with the *paligai*.

Nālam-nīr used to be an occasion for much mirth-making among the women folk assembled, poking fun at the bride and

bridegroom. *Pādapūja, i.e.* the bride and bridegroom washing the feet of their respective parents in token of worship just before the actual wedding ritual, seems to be novel feature unknown in the past.

Marriages are not done in the months of *Āḍi, Purattāsi* and *Mārkaḻi.* Most marriages are done in *Vaikāsi* and *Āni*; a few in *Āvaṇi* and *Thai.* As the Kārkāttār were all agriculturists, months are chosen when all can be free from field work.

The *Arasanikkāl* is now taken by the couple to the garden and planted on good soil; the water kept in to the pots near it are poured for the sapling so that it grows and becomes a live tree. The parents of either see to it that it grows into a full tree.

Graha Pravēsam

Where the wedding takes place in the bridegroom's house, the couple are invited at the next auspicious day for a feast in the bride's house and *vice versa.* This is known as *graha pravēsam* (entering the house, as a married couple for the first time). Where people could afford it, this was as elaborate a function as the wedding itself. Of course there are many presents given to the couple.

Consummation of the wedding or nuptials is a matter of convenience. In the past, it was an equally elaborate and separate function, done many days or even a month later. However in modern days, this is arranged for, even on the same day, always in the bridegroom's place. Presents of furniture including nuptial cots and beds, of utensils for cooking and running a new household, accompany the bride to the other place.

An earlier ceremony conducted for the bride in the bridegroom's house is called *Pālūṟṟal* (giving her milk). This is in essence one of inducting her in to the work of the husband's household for the first time at an auspicious hour. She is first asked to bring water from the river or tank, for cooking. Secondly she is asked to clean up a vegetable cutting knife *(arivāḷ manai)*, decorate it and cut some plantain on it. Thirdly, she is asked to warm milk in a bronze pot on the oven; the pot is always a

bronze one. Then she gives her husband and the other immediate relatives of his, a cup of milk each. This completes her induction into the work in the husband's house and from then onwards, she is taken as a full member of the house qualified to take part in all its work. Then follows a limited feast in which she serves food to her husband and the members of his family.

Three other functions in the first year of marriage for the married couple are important. The first is *Āḍi-tēvai*, the inviting of the newly married couple to the bride's place. The general belief is that the girl should not conceive in the month of *Āḍi* (July-August). Hence, the bride is brought to her mother's house even before the first of *Āḍi*. The bridegroom is invited, given feasts and presents. 18th *Āḍi* coincides with his visit. On this day, the yellow cotton thread on which the *Tirumāṅgalya* and its accessory golden balls and gems are stringed on a golden chain; the thread is then confined to the *Gaṅga* (Kāvēri) after due *pūja.* When the month is over the bride and bridegroom are sent back together to his place. *Dīpāvali* is the next important ceremony. Both are invited to the bride's place and new clothes are given to both. After oil bath and feasts, they return to his place, Poṅgal is always celebrated in the bridegroom's place. Elaborate presents are sent for the bride to his place. Sugar cane, jaggery and fruits form the major items of presents.

16. PREGNANCY AND CHILD BIRTH

After marriage there are certain rituals connected with pregnancy and child birth. The arrival of the first child is a great event in any family. On the seventh month of pregnancy an elaborate ritual is celebrated in the birth place of the girl. It is generally known as *Vaḷai kāppu* providing the protective bands or bangles. This is principally a ladies' function, although men are also invited to the function. This function as well as the next, are to be done in an odd month, the seventh universally; very rarely the ninth; never on a month of even number. Seven kinds of rice dishes (such as *veṇ pongal*, *eḷ*, (sesamum) coconut, *puḷi*, lime, sugar and curd) are prepared; seven kinds of sweets, seven savoury dishes, seven *vadakam* etc. are got ready; seven comes into the

picture because it is the seventh month of pregnancy. If this is done on the ninth month, every item will have to be of nine varieties. At an auspicious hour, the pregnant girl is bathed and dressed in new clothes presented by the parents for the purpose. New protective bangles known as *Sūl kāppu* (pregnancy bands) are placed on her forearms. They are made in twisted silver and gold. Then a good number of green glass bangles are placed on her forearms. This and the feeding are the chief functions. Her hair is decked in a profusion of fragrant jasmine and other flowers. Then she is treated to the luxurious variety of dishes. Along with her a few young girls are also fed. Then there is a bigger feast for men and women. Presents of sari and other clothes also arrive from the girl's husband's place. The ceremony is known in different names according to the various acts of felicitation, as *pū-chūṭṭal*, *vaḷaiyal-kāppu* and *sādam pisaindu-pōḍutal.* The idea behind this is that all the pregnant woman's desires are to be satisfied in flower, jewellery, food and in dress.

The next function is the *Seemantam* conducted in the same month, but in the husband's place. Here the bridegroom and the bride are seated together, the purōhit lights a fire and performs a homa. This is an orthodox ceremony, propitiating the various deities and praying for a safe delivery and long life to the child to be born. Music accompanies the function. This is a much grander function than the previous one, and most male members of both the parties take part. When this ceremony is over, the girl is brought back to her parent's place, where her first child birth is to take place. Her coming here also should be in an odd month, seven or nine.

Child Birth

As soon as the child is born, a bunch of *margosa* leaves are tied over the threshold of the house and over the place of confinement of the girl, to indicate that there is a child birth in this house and that unclean persons or those carrying any infection should not enter. The new-born child and its mother are kept in isolation in the house for fifteen days at the end of which a purification ceremony is performed by a purōhit. On the evening

of the day, a short pūja is made for Ganēsa to whom rice and coconut chips soaked in treacle is offered. Protective bands are placed on the child's arms. A string made of *caleotropsis* fibre is tied round the child's waist, a band of margosa leaf ridges is placed on its hands; bangles of twisted copper and silver are placed on the child's feet. The child is named on this day. It is placed for the first time in a cradle, then it is taken out and handed over to an elderly sumangali who had led a happy life with many children and grand children and the mother of the child bows to the lady and receives her blessings.

17. FESTIVALS

Tamiḻnādu abounds in festivals. There is a major festival every month in all the twelve months of the year. It is needless to dwell on them at length. These are celebrated by all classes of the people including the vēlālar. As examples, we may mention the New Year Day festival, the *Chitrā Pourṇami, Vināyaka chaturti* and *Dipāvali.* There are yet more others which are celebrated equally by the others but they have some unique features pertaining to the Kārkāttār. Some of them are indicated below.

Āḍip-Perukku

The *Ādi* 18th (early August, about the 3rd) has a special significance for the Kārkāttār. On this day all the village families go to the Kāvēri and there perform a short *pūja* to the river, as a token of thanks-offering for the water she carries and supplies to their fields. This is perhaps a rare instance of a festival when the entire community of men, women and children take part. All of them ofcourse bathe in the river. The river is conceived as a celestial nymph; along with food and flowers, she is offered *kādōlai* (a symbolic earring made of palamyra leaf, dyed red), and *karukamaṇi*, (black bangles). These are dropped into the Kāvēri waters with heart-felt prayers. Kapparisi (rice mixed with treacle and coconut chips) are offered to Kāvēri and distributed to all those present. This is a gāla day for the children who prepare a toy cart on four wheels, place all the offerings

to the river on the cart and draw it to the river bank. This is also an occasion to display their sense of art and creative ingenuity in decorating the cart.

This festival is a very important one for the Kārkāttār, for whom the Kaveri is a sort of tutelory deity. On this day, the 18th, the belief is that Kaveri is in full floods, water rising up to its 18 steps fully. For the past, more than a thousand years or perhaps even twenty centuries, it has been like this and naturally the gratitude of the Kārkāttār who are typical of the agriculturists is shown to the river. We should remember this was before the Mettur dam was built and before the threat of the Mysore dams arose.

Sarasvati Pūja

One of the very important domestic festivals is the Sarasvati pūja. The Kārkāttār conduct it in their homes in their own way, and not on the Brahmin model. The *kolu* (durbar or sitting in State of the deity) is generally not laid out for the first nine days. On the day of the Sarasvati *pūja* printed books and more particularly *palm* leaf manuscripts are taken out, cleaned and arranged for *pūja*. Special care is taken to oil the palm leaves. All agricultural implements and other domestic tools such as weights and measurs and kitchen tools are cleaned and laid out for worship. The Sarasvathi puja is also the Ayudha Pūja, worship of work, of the instruments and tools used for any kind of work. This makes it clear that the agriculturist, the Kārkāttār, is the one class which really follows the maxim "work is worship". A piece of thread soaked in turmeric water is thrown over the books and manuscripts arranged for worship and pūja is offered twice that day. On the second day, the Vijayadasami day, another pūja is done and the books and manuscripts are removed; children take out their books and sit down for a short period in symbolic study. This day is considered particularly auspicious for children's first admission to school and starting of the first lessons in alphabet.

On this day in particular, there is a festival in the local Śiva temple. Parvati, consort of Śiva, is taken out in procession and

she slays the Mahiṣāsura, the symbol of ignorance. This particular act is known as the shooting of the arrow *(ambu-pōḍutal).*

Tiruvādirai Darsanam

The *Ārudra* festival in the month of *Mārgaḻi* (December-January) is a very important one for the Kārkāttār. This relates to the dance of Naṭarāja. On this day, the form of Naṭarāja is taken out in a procession and a dance of Naṭaraja is conducted in the temple corridor. This is the day when the Naṭaraja's car is drawn though the streets of Chidambaram and His symbolic cosmic dance is conducted in the temple. All the Kārkāṭṭār do a pūja for Naṭarāja in their homes and offer *kaḷi* (a sweet cumbu or rice porridge) to Him in memory of the same porridge which was offered a thousands years age by the low caste Sēnda to Naṭarāja and accepted by Him. The puja with *kaḷi* on the ārdra day is the unique festival of the Kārkāttār.

Poṅgal Festival

Pongal or *Sankarānti,* as is well known is a national festival for the whole of Tamiḻnādu for four days. The first day is the Bhōgi-panḍigai on the last day of *Mārgaḻi.* The next day, the first of Thai is the Poṅgal day; the day next to it is the Māṭṭuppongal set apart for the cattle; and the day following commonly called Karināḷ, is universally set apart for games and play.

It is usual for all parents to send poṅgal presents to their daughters for poṅgal festival. This is sent a day earlier. All communities of people in Tamiḻnādu observe this custom fully The presents usually consisting of sugarcane, sugar and jaggery plenty of plantain fruits, a few pieces of the turmeric plant (rhizomes with the plants) are sent by a special messenger. Some money is also presented. Where the father is not alive, a brother sends the present. Among the Kārkāṭṭār, a more important and a more precious item is added; and that is a plaited wick dipped in ghee with some ghee in a container. This is intended to be lighted during *poṅgal.* This is a matter of rare right and privilege for a married girl or woman, irrespective of age (so long as she is a sumaṅgali) to receive it from the house of her birth.

The idea is that she is taking all prosperity from her birth place into her wedded house. This is a very unique custom still preserved among the Kārkāttār. Where the other presents could not be sent, as it is very often happens in modern days because the lady's husband is employed in a far off city, the ghee-soaked wick at least is sent by post, many days in advance, with an amount by money order to substitute for the other presents.

What have been mentioned so far, are festivals which are celebrated by all the Kārkāttār at the same time through out the land. There are yet some others which are celebrated by individual families on occasions suitable to them. The more important among them are described below. Of these the first two originated with the Kārkāttār but are now observed by many other communities also. They are called *nōnbu*, penance accompanied with fasting and worship. The others are merely known as worship (paḍaittal) and continue to be peculiar to the Kārkāttaar.

Sevvāy-Piḷḷaiyār Nōnbu

A special worship of Ganēsa on the night of a Tuesday (*Sevvāy*) twice a year in the months of *Āḍi* (August–September) and *Thai* (December–January) is known by this name. All the women of the community assemble together in a suitable house in the village in the night. This is an exclusive function for women and no male, not even a baby in arms, is allowed into the house. The actual worship is done after midnight. Necessary material for pūja and for cooking are brought into the house. The function begins after the entire village has gone to sleep. Rice is pounded into powder along with leaves of pongamia end margosa, one or three images of Ganēsa are made on the spot for worship, and the pūja performed. The offerings made to Ganēsa are eaten up then and there by the women folk present; no part is kept out or taken home or given to a male. No male member is allowed to witness the pūja or partake of any of the offerings. This exclusive worship is said to confer long life to the husbands of the participants and prosperity for the family. Legends say that any male who attempted to witness the pūja through a key hole or in any similar maanner was struck blind on the spot.

This is also known as *Avvaiyār nōnbu*, since the Tamil legendary old poetess Avvai performed it and secured the grace of Ganēsa. As the years rolled on, many other communities copied this pūja from the Kārkāttār and this is now found widely prevalent among all classes of the Vēḷāḷār.

Veḷḷi-p-pillaiyar nonbu: This is done on a Friday in the small hours of the morning, just before the day-break. Women only do this of course, but this is not so secretive as the other one; the offerings cooked and presented to Ganesa are even distributed to the males after some time. Cakes and *Koḻukkaṭṭai* are made without the addition of salt and offered.

Worship of the Family-deity called '*Veeṭṭu deivattukku paḍaittal*' in Tamiḻ: This is a peculiar worship done perhaps once in five years when all men and women of the same gōtra are invited to assemble in the house of the parent stock for the pūja. The family deity is generally invoked in a special sari, to which worship is offered and the saris are stored after pūja in a rattan box or in a new burnt mud pot and kept in a place where it will be free from pollution by touch.

On the day of the pūja all the members of the gōtra assemble in the elder's house with their wives and children. Daughters and sons-in-law of the house are also invited. The place of worship is a large hall in the house. The place is cleaned and decorated with kōlam and red and white paint and festoons. The saris placed in the pot at a previous worship are taken out and twisted round and placed erect on a clean seat. The belief is that any women young or old who died a *sumāṅgali, i.e.*, while her husband is alive, exists in the *sari* as the guardian angel of the house. Along with the old *saris* worshipped previously and stored in the pot, new substitute saris are placed on the seat for worship. Besides, new saris to represent any women who might have died in the *sumaṅgalī* state between the date of the last *pūja* and the present one, are also placed; where necessary, additional saris are also added. After *pūja*, the old saris are taken out and distributed to the sumaṅgali women in this household and the new ones stored up in the pot for the next *pūja*.

The sari used is also of a special make. It is called *veḷḷai kaṭṭuppuḍavai*; it was of a dark red colour with a lighter shade border. It was always made to order and was not available in the market. Often, white dhoties and other saris are also placed in the seat of worship and these are presented to the menfolk and the daughters of the house. No black line or border is permitted in the dhoti or sari; they are pure white or red. Such *pūja* saris are not meant for daily wear but only for special auspicious occasions. Along with saris, *Tirumāngalyam* and the *Muhūrttak-kūṛai* of the ladies of the house are also placed on the *pūja* pedestal. When a partition of family property is made, these deity-saris are also partitioned. If there are not sufficient number of saris a special *pūja* is conducted where new saris are purchased and worshipped and then the partition is effected. The local deities and the kuladeivam are propitiated by a *pūja*, the previous evening.

The saris thus taken out after *pūja* are considered to have divine curative powers. Children who fall ill in the house are wrapped with these saris in the belief that their illness will be cured.

Pūja cannot be done in the year in which a death occurs in a house of any member of the gotra. Hence it so happens that for many years this pūja cannot not be done.

Kula Deiva Worship

What was narrated about is the worship of the tutelary deity of the house (vīṭṭu deivam). There is another called the *kula deiva* pūja (worship of the common deity for the group or class). Here the *kula* stands for the *gōtra*; member families of the gōtra have the same *Kula Deiva. Kula deivam* here is always a minor deity like Ankālamman, Periyanāyakiamman, Māriamman etc. This deity is usually installed, not in the big Śiva temple of the village nor in the centre of the village, but only on the out-skirts there-of. Compared to the Śiva temple, this was an insignificant one. But yet families were required to go there and offer their own particular worship at least once a year. This Amman may not be in the same village where the families cluster. Generally it is in

another village which is a few miles away from theirs. Since all villages were virtually self-contained economic units, it was just possible that there might not be adequate inter-village communication. To ensure that the villages had plenty of mutual social contact, this system of Kula Deiva worship, in places other than one's own was probably laid down.

Whole families, men, women and children, go to the other village in bullock carts for the whole day. (This practice obtains even now). Arrangements are made well in advance. Articles for *pūja* and for preparation of food are taken. On arrival at the other village local friends and relatives are also invited. The actual *pūja* its done by the *Gurukkaḷ* (in rare cases by the *pūjari* of a lower class). The women of the families make a few big balls of rice dough mixed with treacle, make a depression on their top to contain some oil (in this case ghee), place a wick on it and light several such lamps in the immediate presence of the deity. This is called *mā-viḷakku* (flour-lamps). The lamps burn for some time and when the *pūja* is over they are broken up and distributed, as offerings of the deity to be eaten by friends and relatives.

This pūja is made to coincide with the first birth anniversary of a child (both made and female) in the families. Usually, the shaving of the hair on the head of the child is done on this day at this temple and that is the occasion for a *pūia*. This is usually celebrated with a certain degree of pomp. It is customary in the families, even today to perform this shaving ceremony in the kula deiva temple.

The ear-boring ceremony for the child is also done this day, the day of the first anniversary of its birth. The gold-smith does this, with a golden pin having a pendant. The child is the recipient of many presents from its maternal uncle and similar relatives.

19. THE KĀRKĀTTĀR FUNERAL RITES

Like most of the communities in Tamiḻnadu the Kārkāttār cremate the dead bodies, except in the case of children, sanyasins (ascetics) and persons who had died of smallpox and measles.

A cluster of Kārkāttār families has a common cremation ground where the dead body is carried on the shoulders of four men of the same gotra, or close relatives, and then cremated. It was customary to wait for the arrival of the close relatives of the deceased before removing the body; when it is ascertained that most of them have arrived and the others may not come in time, arrangements are made for the removal of the body; The last minutes of the dying man or woman are helped to pass off peacefully by a recital of Tiruvāçakam, the sacred utterances sung by St. Manikkavācakar (made if possible by the children or grand children of the dying person). A bier is made with newly cut bamboos; the body is washed in a ceremonial manner with many articles such as oil, milk, lemon juice, coconut water, sandal and Ganges water (which is usually kept handy in a small sealed brass pot in many families), and then placed on the bier. The two toes of the body are tied together with a shred of new cloth another shred is used to fasten the crown and the lower jaw, in order that no de-formations occur when the *rigor mortis* sets in.

A pillow is provided with darbha grass and the body except the face is covered with a new white cloth. If the deceased was a person who had received *Śiva dikṣa* (spiritural initiation) or had been performing Śiva *pūja*, then special rites are performed to discharge these spiritural acquisitions from him. The son of the deceased or his representative accompanies the corpse, carrying fire in a new mudpot hung on a tripod; this fire is intended to light the funeral pyre at the cremation ground. Funeral drums mark the death and the removal of the body; a conch-blower accompanies the drummers along with the corpse to the cremation ground. Puffed rice, coconut and plantain leaves are strewn at intervals along the path to the ground. Split logs of wood are spread at the cremation ground on which the corpse is laid. Some further rituals are done there before actual cremation. *Vāykkarisi* is one ritual; a handful of rice with a coin is offered to the body and thrown away on a piece of cloth, which is collected by the village washerman. Each member of the family and near relatives offer this; the washerman bags a substantial collection of money and of rice. The presentation of this rice i

symbolic of the primitive belief that this rice helps to relieve the hunger of the departed soul on its path towards the region of the manes. The rituals attendant on the funeral, are all in a reverse direetion to those done at auspicious occasions. The body is carried to the cremation ground, feet foremost; the feet are kept towards the south of the pyre. *Vāykkarisi* is again offered, the strings tying together the toes and the head and the lower jaw are snapped. The son or the heir who lights the funeral pyre goes round the pyre on which the body is now placed, thrice in an anti-clockwise direction, carrying water on an unburnt mudpot on which two holes are made on each round; the out flowing water is sprinkled on the corpse with the back of the hand; the pot is then thrown down so that it breaks. Generally all trinkets are removed from the body of the deceased man or woman, as soon as the body is laid in the funeral pyre before lighting the fire; no strings or other fastenings are permitted on the body. The whole body is then covered with a new white cloth; dried cow during cakes which will easily burn are spread on the body before the pyre is lit. The son then lights the funeral pyre with a piece of lighted sandal splinter, with his back to the pyre and inserting the fire by thrusting it backwards, without looking at the pyre. He then goes away to a tank or river, bathes, and then returns home with the other relatives; he is required to wash his feet before setting foot into the house. Meanwhile, his close relatives or friends distribute the fees to the various services such as the drummer, conch-blower, barber, washerman, the cremation attendant and so on.

In the village, if the death occurs in a house in a main street, all *pūja* in the central temple is stopped until the corpse is removed from the house; then a purification ceremony is performed in the temple and pūja resumed.

• All preparation of food is stopped in the house of death until the removal of the corpse. The main mourners go without food for the period. Neighbours, who are of course relatives of the deceased, take the visitors to their house and feed them when necesary.

The second day's ceremony is called *pāl teḷi* (sprinkling of milk) or *sañjīvanam.* Early in the morning, relatives and friends go to the cremation ground taking the son with them, remove the bones from the burnt body and throw them into a sacred river or tank with appropriate rites. The remaining ashes are laid out, as though they were his body itself, milk is sprinkled on it and also several varieties of grains, to symbolize that whatever ash is left of the mortal remains of the deceased, is used for sustaining the agiricultural crops. All the people have a bath in the river or tank, go home and have a meal in the deceased's house.

Mourning is observed for fifteen days. The post-funeral rites are of four classes: one, the *nitya srāddha* for the period of fifteen days; two, the *uttara krīya* or *karumādi* on the fifteenth day and the *graha yajña* on the next day; three, the *māsya* or monthly *srāddha* for eleven months following; and four, the *srāddha* on the twelfth month or anniversary day. *Nitya srāddha* consists of a ritual of propitiation for the welfare of the soul of the departed on whose account a *dāna* (gift) is made to a Brahmin; the *dāna* consists of rice and groceries (un-cooked) and vegetables served on a plantain leaf with a water vessel (a brass tumbler) or the like. This is done for each of the fifteen days at the end of which comes the fifteenth day ceremony.

Even before day break of the day, a small piece of stone is placed in the house; on this the spirit of the deceased is invoked and the women of the house join together and pour their sorrow over it in lines of lamentation. Then the men folk take the stone in a basket along with the other requisites to the appointed place on the bank of a tank, where a small shelter is erected for the performance of the obsequies. A Dēsika or *purōhit* is present for the due performance of the rituals. This is a long process extending over several hours. The soul of the deceased is re-embodied 'by mantras on a *darbha* form and all the rituals, due from birth to death are performed, with *agni* (fire) as the witness, Elaborate gifts are made to Brahmins in 1, 6, 6–8, or 1, 10 and 18 varieties; articles gifted are invariably rice and groceries, vegetables and fruits,

chappals, new clothes, vessels, seats, umbrella, fan, book, and cow with calf. Each is accompanied by a cash present. After all presents are over, and the *purōhit* and Brahmins are sent away, the party have a bath, return home and have a good meal.

The next day's rituals give a culmination to this day's work. It is called the *graha yajña,* or the sacrifice for (the welfare of) the home. A sacrificial fire is lit, all the deities are propitiated, elaborate *dānas* are again made, mantra water is sprinkled on all the related persons and in the entire house itself in token of purification from the death pollution, Death is an inauspicious event and with this purification ceremony all inauspiciousness is deemed to have ended and a new feeling of auspiciousness to have settled down up on the family. This is also the occasion for the receipt of many presents by the children of the deceased from the other close relatives.

The māsya is a monthly *srāddha ceremony* performed on the monthly *tithi* (lunar day of death) of the departed person. This is a form of propitiation for the departed soul, conducted by the *purōhit.*

The first anniversary of the day of death is performed on the twelfth month with great pomp. It is a great event in the family when many friends and relatives are invited. The propitiation ceremony is done elaborately, presents are made to Brahmins and a sumptuous lunch is also served. More important is the poor feeding on the day. This ceremony is known as the *sraddha ceremony* and is repeated every year.

20. INTEGRATION OF THE DIFFERENT AREAS

The Kārkāttār had been living in the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam area (Kañchipuram and Tiru-Ālangāḍu), the Coḷanād and the Pāṅdinād. But now, it is doubtful if they could be found in numbers any where in the Toṇḍai-maṇḍalam area. In each of the other areas they are found in large numbers.

Difficulty in transport and communication kept the Kārkāṭṭār in the north (Tanjāvūr, Tiruchi and South Arcot) and the Kārkāṭṭār

in the south (Madurai, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelvēli) separate. They had throughout kept themselves as strangers to each other, as if in water-tight compartments. They would know that they belong to the same community; they would dine together but would not inter-marry.

A span of three centuries separates the Kārkāttār of Cōḻanād and the Kārkāttār of Paṇḍinād. Those of Paṇḍinād still retain all the cultural peculiarities which marked the Kārkāttār in general as a separate community before their migration farther south. They retain all the gōtra titles, all the special characteristics in the matter of food, and the very special ceremony of *Tiru-viḷakkīdu* even more rigidly than those in the Cōḻanād. Their marriage and other customs continue to be identical. Now with quicker means of transport and communication and with more of governmental and private jobs which throw them up into all sorts unknown and unexpected corners of Tamiḻnādu, the two sections have to know each ōther more closely and they have to realize that they are one community. Inter-marriages have started with the hope of effecting a real integration of the members in the two areas into one unit, as they had been before the historic migration.

A word may be said about the Koṅgumaṇḍalam area. Some enlightened persons in the Koṅgunāḍu say they are also Kārkāttār. The Kavuṇḍar of Koṅgunāḍu come under two broad classifications one is the Vēḷāḷak-kavuṇḍar and the other, Vanniyak-kavuṇḍar; the latter have been non-vegetarians for ages past. The former call themselves Vēḷāḷar. In support of the theory that they are also Kārkāttār, they have their own version of the Kārkātta incident in Paṇḍinād—the Vēḷāḷar standing surety for the proper behaviour of the clouds. It is called the Kārkātta nāṭakam, done as a musical drama at the close of the 18th century. Other books of the same category are *Meḻi viḷakkam* (a poem on the plough and the plougher) and the large *Vēḷāḷar purāṇam*. In spite of all this evidence, the Kārkāṭhar of Cōḻanādu will be very unlikely to consider them as of the same fold as themselves.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF KABĪRDĀS AND RĀMALIṄGASWĀMI

S. N. GANESAN, M.A., Ph.D.

Among the saintly philosopher-poets of Hindi and Tamiḻ who, moved by the strife-torn condition of the society of their times, tried to find a universally acceptable religious ideology placing stress on self-refinement and mutual love, Kabīrdās (1398–1474) and Rāmaliṅgaswāmi[1] (1823–1874) have an important place. Though they belonged to different ages and different areas, their religious and philosophical ideas show many striking similarities. These two were saints who had secluded themselves from the attractions of the worldly life, but they evinced a keen interest in the well-being of their respective societies. Aware of the demands of the contemporary societies, each evolved his philosophical concepts based on the principle of universal love and brotherhood.

The idea of an impersonal God, the relation between the Self and the Divine Power and the path of realisation conceived of by these saints show remarkable similarity, which goes to prove that the different religious schools in the North and the South had accepted many similar fundamental ideas as a result of mutual exchange and cultural assimilation. A study of the religious and philosophical concepts of the two saints will reveal that they had discerningly accepted the basic and universally acceptable religious and philosophical ideas in the Indian tradition, eschewing all that were prone to arouse disapprobation and create tension. Kabīr belonged to a school of poets in Hindi known as Jñānamārga (The Path of Knowledge), which was famous for its rationalistic outlook and outspoken criticism of meaningless religious rituals. The poets of this school considered self-purification through mental control and physical mortification as the way of attaining union

1. Otherwise known as '*Tiruvaruṭpirakāśavaḷḷaḷār*' or in short '*Vaḷḷaḷār*'.

with God. The basic tenets of their philosophy were inherited from the Yogis of the Nāth Panth, but they were influenced by several other philosophies as well. Among the poets of the Path of Knowledge, Kabīr is considered as the most important. Rāmaliṅga Swāmi came in the tradition of Śaiva saints, but by his personal spiritual attainments he established his individuality and founded a philosophy of his own, which though not opposed to the basic ideologies of Śaivism, show some basic principles which are meant for making spiritual attainment possible for all. Before going into the philosophical ideas of the two saint-poets, it will be useful to scan the background of their times.

Background of Kabīr's Life

It was in a period of social strife and religious degeneration that Kabīrdās lived. For centuries since the period of the conquests of Mahmud of Ghazni (1001–1024), the political and social life in North India was constantly under strain. The various dynasties that established their power subsequent to the attack of Ala-ud-din Ghori could not give stable government or good administration. Some Muslim rulers tried to bring at the point of the sword the Hindus into the realm of the Islam, and they succeeded to some extent. Many of the Hindu kings were defeated and vanquished, and many others became the vassals of the Muslim rulers. There was a dissatisfaction among the defeated rulers and the general public.

The political instability had its impact on the religious and social life as well. Frequent attacks by the Muslim conquerors and the defeat of the local rulers resulted in a sort of disappointment, self-disparagement and large-scale social degeneration. In a caste-ridden society, it was quite natural that the prurient upper classes felt practically no responsibility, and the lower classes suppressed for centuries could feel none. The ritualistic aspects of religion had gained prominence over the philosophical, devotional and ethical aspects. This aroused a defiant attitude in many, and several religious groups came into existence which did not accept the orthodox canons of religion, criticized its vain-gloriousness and even went to the extent of challenging the authority of the scrip-

tures which sanctioned the differentiation between man and man on the basis of castes.

The condition of the Muslim masses was none the better. Though the rulers came as victors, the supremacy of none of the dynasties could be fully established. Rivalries among dynasties and even among family-members were common. Many of the rulers thought of amassing wealth and living a luxurious life, leaving the common man to his fate.

During this period of indefiniteness and conflict, Jainism and Buddhism got some opportunity to expand their influence. Under the Rāṣṭrakūṭas (800–1000 A.D.) Jainism had flourished in many parts of the country, though it could not get wide-scale acceptance throughout. As Jainism had already accepted the concept of Incarnation and several other traits from Hinduism, it did not find much violent opposition. In the 12th and the 13th centuries it was very popular in Gujarat. After this, its power declined, but did not completely vanish.

Similarly Buddhism also, especially its Mahāyāna branch gained popularity in many places. In course of time even Mahāyāna split into two - *Pāramita Naya* and *Mantra Naya*, of which Mantra Naya adopted Mantras and Tantras which were already popular among several Hindu cults. *Vajrayāna* branch of Buddhism gave importance to Mantras, Tantras, Haṭhayoga and copulation in their ritualistic performances.

Siddhas and Nāthas:—When there was such a conglomeration of religious cults with their diverse ideologies, philosophies and ritualistic practices, there arose a rather militant religious group as a result of the upsurge among the lower classes against the orthodoxism and the socio-religious discriminations widely prevalent in most places. This was the cult of the Siddhas, who gave much importance to spiritual elevation through mental control and physical mortification. They also practised Haṭhayoga. The Siddhas of the North show remarkable similarities with the Siddhas in the South in their philosophical ideas and religious practices.

Another branch of the Tantric Mahāyāna was the Nātha cult, otherwise known as the Avadhūt cult. The Nāthas claim that Ādinātha or Śiva was the founder of the cult. However it is accepted that Gorakhnāth was the first propagator of the Nātha cult.[2] Hazari Prasad Dwivēdi opines that the Nātha cult originated from the Śākta branch of Śaivism. (Dwivedi, H. P., 1950, P. 179 pl. see Bibliography at the end). Nāthas gave importance to the knowledge of the Self as a part of the Cosmic force and prescribed mental and physical control for its attainment. Haṭhayoga also found a place in their rituals.

Advaita Philosophy:—The establishment of Advaita (Non-dualism) by Āçārya Śaṅkara as a philosophical system was an important event in the history of Hinduism. This saved Hinduism from slow annihilation due to the extensive expanse of Jainism and Buddhism. With a strong personality and a well-defined philosophy, Śaṅkara could successfully counter the spreading of these religions and give a new life to Hindusim. His influence spread all over India so much so that a succession of religious preceptors accepted his philosophy and became its interpreters. Due to the influence of Rāmānuja, Rāmānanda, Nimbārka, Vallabha and Mādhva, the whole of North India saw a widespread devotional movement with different ideas about the ways and means of attaining realisation.

The two major devotional ideologies which developed may be considered to have their origin in the '*Swarūpa lakṣaṇa*' and '*Taṭastha lakṣaṇa*' of Śaṅkara. In *Swarūpa lakṣaṇa*', the real form of God is considered as impersonal and beyond perceptual knowledge. He is *Sat-çit-ānanda*. In *Taṭastha lakṣaṇa*, physical qualities in relation to time and space have been attributed to the Supreme power. Śaṅkara has conceived of *Māyā* to differentiate between the formless impersonal power from the universe

2. It is difficult to trace the origin of the ideas of Gorakhnāth. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi (1950) P. 32 *Nāth Sāmpradāy* has traced the influence of Śākta cult of Śaivism on him. Govind Trigunayat (1957, *Kabir ki Viçārdhārā* P. 90) says that he was a Buddhist but was later influenced by Śaivism and Yogic cults. Anyhow it may be said that many of his ideas were earlier prevalent among the Śaivites and the Jains. (See Ganesan, S. N., 1975 see Bibliography).

with different formal manifestations. This concept also spread widely and found a place in the philosophies of several schools including the Nāthas, and through them among the Saint Poets of Hindi.

The Dualistic (*Dvaita*) philosophy of Mādhva and the Dualistic-non-Dualistic (*Dvaitādvaita*) philosophy of Nimbārka also had wide influence, and from their inspiration developed the cult of *Saguṇa* devotion, visualising God in various definite forms. The two main incarnations of Viṣṇu, Rāma, the embodiment of virtue and Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of resplendant charm became great inspiring forces of religious movements, which influenced the poetry of almost all languages of North India.

It is at such a time, when various religious and devotional cults were preaching their ideologies, often vying with each other to establish their supremacy, that Kabīr lived. While the religious movements were working with vigour, the socio-political life was in a morbid state.

Background of Rāmaliṅga Aḍigaḷ

The social environment of Rāmaliṅga Swāmi was quite different. The difference of time and the local conditions cannot be overlooked. However it has to be said that in South India also prevailed a state of tension, though not so much as in North India, and wide-scale disparagement had spread in the political, social and religious fields.

The East India Company came to rule the Madras Presidency in 1802, and ever since till the attainment of Independence, it was in the hands of the English. It was ruled by them through the collectors. But here and there, there were local chieftains called Pāḷayakkārs. When the governance went to the hands of the Empress in 1858, the Madras government became stronger. As such, the province never had to face a situation of conflict and tension as North India at the time of Kabīr.

But the British rule had slow and sustained impact on the social life. Caste system had flourished earlier. In the early period

of the British rule, the higher castes availed of the opportunities of education and gained some high positions. It was only towards the end of the 19th century that the lower castes began to get some education through the missionary efforts of the Western priests and scholars. However, even then, their condition was not substantially improved. Thus during the lifetime of Rāmaliṅga Swāmi, the social stratification was strong, but it did not result in serious tensions.

In the religious field, the antagonism which existed between the Śaivites and the Vaiṣṇavites during the earlier periods had somewhat subsided. Though they could not reconcile with each other in the ideological field, there were no overt conflicts which could spoil the social atmosphere. The society at large had accepted certain norms from both.

The Muslim contact also did not create much tension as in North India. The Muslims came to South India not as conquerors but as traders and had more peaceful cultural contacts with the Hindus. Many Muslims have enriched Tamiḻ Literature in the 18th and the 19th centuries.

Later, when the Europeans came to South India, then also there was not much religious strife. The religious work of the missionaries were peaceful. As many of them identified themselves with the Indians, even learning the local language and writing in it, there was no serious cause for conflicts. However, their success in propagating Christianity, and the success of the English in establishing power had some deep influence on the overall psychic features of the people. Though there were no serious conflicts, there was also no strong uniting force to keep the society tightly knit together and to drive it in the way of progress with a common purpose and direction. Thus there was the necessity of finding a religious and philosophical ideology which would not impair the existing values, but would be acceptable to all alike. It was precisely this need that the philosophy of Rāmaliṅga Aḍigaḷ fulfilled.

It was in such social backgrounds that Rāmaliṅga Aḍigaḷ and Kabīrdās lived and made their pursuit of divine knowledge. Their

verses give vent to their philosophical and ethical ideas on the one hand and reveal their mystic experiences on the other. In spite of the difference in the social background and personal environment, their ideas show much similarity and are in line with the Indian philosophical tradition. An attempt is made here to give a comparative outline of their spiritual ideas, philosophical concepts and mystic visions.

SPIRITUAL IDEAS

The greatness of Rāmaliṅga Swāmi and Kabīrdās is more as saints than as poets. They had no urge to become poets, nor were their compositions intended to give aesthetic pleasure. Fully aware of the transient nature of life, they had an intense desire to attain something more than the worldly pleasure, to attain a stage of transcendence and supreme bliss. All their endeavours were centred round this dominant desire, a desire to free the Self from the bondages of worldly life and get united with the Supreme Cosmic Power.

Concept of God

Kabīrdās belonged to the school of Jñānamārga, the adherers to which conceived of God as a formless, Omnipresent power ununderstandable by normal senses. Rāmaliṅga Aḍigaḷ, though belonging to the Śaivite school, has spoken about these abstract qualities of God, and finally visualised it in the form of Luminance (*jōti*). According to Kabīr, 'He is unattainable (by normal senses), unseen, and luminant.[3] Brahman is limitless and exists everywhere as knowledge.[4] Rāmaliṅga Swāmi says that the Supreme being which is omnipresent, unfailingly exists in the macrocosmic and the microcosmic world and is itself the living and non-living things.[5] This Supreme Power is itself the existence of the universe. It is life, life in life and the luminiscence in life.[6] Both the saints have

3. agam agocar gami nahīn tahan jagmagi joti—*Kabīr Granthāvali*, P. 199.
4. avigat aparampār brahma gyān rūp sab ṭhām—*Ibid.*, P. 241.
5. aṇḍamelām piṇḍamelāmuyirkaḷelām poruḷkaḷ
   āṇavelāmiḍaṅkaḷelām nikkamaṟa niṟainta—*Tiru Aruṭpā*, II, P. 57.
6. ulaka nilai muḷutākiyāṅkāṅkuḷḷa
   uyirākiyuyirkkuyirāmoḷi tāṉāgi—*Tiru Aruṭpā*, I, 101.

contended that this Supreme one is beyond normal comprehension. Vaḷḷalār says that God is a pure and Yogic power which is beyond measures, beyond mind and beyond knowledge.[7] Kabīr says that the nature of Rām (God)[8] is not known to any.[9] He is unattainable, unseen, living inside; the whole world is ignorant of Him.[10] Both have stressed that God is existent in every individual. Kabīr says that Hari lives in the heart and advises falling in love with him.[11] The One he is searching throughout the world is at last found to be existing in the body itself.[12] As the omnipresent Master is in every body, Kabīr advises not to speak bitter words to any.[13]

Likewise Rāmaliṅga Swāmi considers God as One who has made his heart His temple.[14] He remains concealed in every living being and is a witness of all acts.[15]

In the Form of Knowledge

Both Rāmaliṅga Aḍigaḷ and Kabīrdās have accepted God in the form of *Jñāna* (Supreme Knowledge). While they have contended that He is attainable by Knowledge, they have also asserted that He Himself is in the form of Knowledge. According to Vaḷḷalār, He is knowledge that dispels ignorance, knowledge to knowledge (*ie.* greatest of knowledge), knowledge in knowledge

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7. aḷavaiyelāṅkaḍantu manaṅkaḍantu maṟṟai
aṟivaiyelāṅkaḍantu kaḍantamala yōgar—*Tiru Aruṭpā*, I, 110.

8. It must be remembered that Kabīr uses the words like Rām, Hari, Govind etc. not in a personal sense. The impersonal God has been addressed by these names.

9. rām gati pār na pāvai koī—*Kabīr Granthāvalī*, P. 195.

10. agam agocar abhi antarā, to ko pār na pāvai dharnī dharā—*Ibid.*, P. 179.

11. hirdā bhītari hari basai tū tāhi lyau lāi—*Ibid.*, P. 44,

12. jā kāran jag dhūṇḍhiyā so to ghaṭ hī māhī.

13. ghaṭ ghaṭ meⁿ vah sāī ramtā kaṭuk vacan mat bol re
—*Kabīr Granthāvalī*, P. 162.

14. enneñcōr kōyilena-k-koṇḍōy—*Tiru Aruṭpā*, I, P. 92.

15. toṇḍulakiluḷḷavuyirtōṟumoḷittāṟṟalelāṅ-
kaṇḍulavukiṉṟatoru kaḷvaṉevaṉ—*Tiru Aruṭpā*, I, P. 46,

(essence of knowledge) and the knowledge within.[16] Kabīr also has said that the unknown and unlimited God exists everywhere in the form of Knowledge.[17]

In the Form of Light

The culmination of the spiritual concept of Rāmaliṅga Swāmi is in his concept of the Supreme Power as Light, an ever luminant cosmic force, which he has named as '*Aruṭperum Jōti*' (The Great Light of Grace). His main object of worship in the later days has been this Light of Grace, which he considered to be the driving force of all universal phenomena. He has sung in many verses about this *Jōti.* '*Aruṭperum Jōti Aṭṭakam,*[18] and '*Aruṭperum Jōti Akaval*'[19] are poems about the great cosmic force in the form of Light of Grace. In *Ānanda-k-kaḷippu,*[20] the poet expresses the unique blissful state he attains by the grace of God.

The concept of Light is not a superficial comparison. The intention of the poet is to go deeper and discover the formless and impersonal supreme power. The light that the saint visualises is the symbol of an abstract and absolute power pervading the whole universe and is the essential driving force in everything. That is why it is described as '*jōtiyuḷ jōtiyuḷ jōti*' (The Light in the Light in the Light). Kabīr has also described his God as Light in many verses. According to him 'He is in the form of Light, which has no death, which has no word or body,[21] and 'Inside, as Light remains God luminant'.[22] Kabīr proclaims that he would unite the light of soul with the Cosmic Light, and would thus become free from the bondages of worldly life.[23]

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16. ayarvaṟu pēraṟivākiyavvaṟivukkaṟivāy aṟivuḷḷaṟivāyaṅkakattuḷḷōraṟivāy—*Tiru Aruṭpā*, II, P. 57.
17. avigat aparampār brahma gyān rūp sab ḍhām —*Kabīr Granthāvali*, P. 241.
18. *Tiru Aruṭpā*, II, Pp. 59–61.
19. *Ibid.*, Pp. 511–515.
20. *Ibid.*, II, Pp. 511–515.
21. jyoti sarūp kāl nahī uhvā, vacan na āhi sarīrā—Qtd. Ram Chandra Shukla—*Hindi Sāhitya kā Itihas*, P. 72.
22. antar jyoti rām pargāsā—*Kabīr Granthāvali*, P. 296.
23. tis jotihi joti milāvūⁿgā, tau mæⁿ bahuri na bhaujali āvūⁿgā —*Ibid.*, P. 123.

Beyond Personal and Impersonal

One important difference between the concepts of Rāmaliṅga Aḍigaḷ and Kabīrdās is that Rāmaliṅga Aḍigaḷ has accepted the Supreme power in the specific form of Śiva also. As a Śaivite, he has accepted the physical form of Śiva, as described by many earlier poets. He was also not against idol worship or religious rituals. He has sung about the deities in several places.[24] The charming physical beauty of Śiva has been vividly described in many stanzas. Rāmaliṅga Aḍigaḷ with utmost confidence says that by seeing the beauteous form of the Lord, the inner hunger will subside.[25] Several stories connected with Śiva have also been narrated by him.

Kabīrdās, on the other hand belonged to a group of saints who considered that the Supreme power is beyond formal description. Though Kabīr has used the names Rām, Hari and Govind in many of his stanzas, these have not been used in the usual senses, but only as synonyms of the Impersonal Power. This concept originally found in Ṛg Veda, has come down through the Upaniṣads and has been accepted by many religious schools.[26] The poets of the Path of Knowledge, including Kabīr have also accepted the idea.

However, this difference in stress should not make us overlook the basic concept of the two poets. In spite of this difference both the poets subscribed to the basic idea that the Supreme Power is both concrete and abstract, with form and without form, but beyond all descriptions. According to H. P. Dwivedi, Kabīr got this idea inherited from the Yoga cult of Gorakhnāth,[27] who proclaimed that this form of God is superior to other forms for meditation and realisation. Kabīr himself has said that the different forms may be useful in various stages of spiritual pursuit.

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24. *Tiru Aruṭpa*, I, P. 53 ff., St. 208–232.

25. cīrtti nikaz cempavaḷaccemmēṉiyiṉaḷakum, pārttiruntāl nammuṭpaci pōṅkāṉ—*Tiru Aruṭpā*, P. 55.

26. For a detailed study of the subject, see Bibliography, Ganesan, S. N. (1975).

27. Hazariprasad Dwivedi (1960, Ed. 6), *Kabīr*, P. 68.

He advises acceptance of the personal God as an object of attachment and the impersonal one as the object of service, but clearly asserts that he himself as a Yogi would concentrate on the One that is beyond form and formlessness.[28] He has clearly defined the stages of spiritual pursuit suitable for different people. The ordinary man worships the God with limited form, the Sādhu (Sage) worships the one who is boundless and impersonal and he who has attained supreme knowledge discards both.[29] Thus according to Kabīr, though the Supreme power can be accepted in different forms, the power which is beyond all perceptual knowledge is the one to be meditated upon at the highest stage of spiritual attainment.

In the case of Rāmaliṅga Swāmi also, the ultimate aim is the realisation of the Supreme, which is beyond the personal and the impersonal. Though he has accepted tradition and sung about the Lord in his concrete forms, his constant effort has been to acquire the knowledge of that Supreme Being, which is formless and beyond description. He has explicitly described such a form in some of his verses. In one verse he says 'He is form, image in the form, form in the image, the One in the form, the formless, the formlessness in the formless, the One in the formless.[30] He urges the ignorant to understand that it is the one that exists in the form and the formless – in the concrete and the abstract.[31]

It is clear that in spite of the difference in stress they lay on the different forms of God, both the saints have the ultimate aim of attaining union with the one Supreme Power which is beyond sensual perception.

PHILOSOPHIC CONCEPTS

God and Self

Both in Śaivism and in Advaita philosophy, it is contended that the Cosmic power pervading the universe and the Soul in the

28. nirguṇ kī sevā karo sarguṇ kī kari ās
sargun nirguṇ ke pare tahā hamārā vās—*Kabīr*.

29. had me[n] rahe so mānvī, behad rahai so sādhu,
had behad donon tajai, tin kā matā agādh—*Kabīr*, P. 215.

30. *Tiru Aruṭpā*, I, P. 104.

31. *Tiru Aruṭpā*, II, P. 436.

individual being are one and the same. The realisation of this truth and dissolving the soul with the boundless cosmic soul has been the ultimate aim of the spiritual pursuit. But, for the soul in the normal state, it is impossible because it is shrouded by Illusion, named Maya in Advaita and Pāśa in Śaivism. As a consequence of this illusion, man fails to realise his own self, the real nature of the soul and its relation with the cosmic force. It is due to this illusion that man becomes strongly conscious about his own self. It is only by abandoning this egoistic feeling that the soul can attain the union with the Lord and resume its real nature. Rāmaliṅga Aḍigaḷ and Kabīrdās have repeatedly spoken about this dissolution of the Self. Aḍigaḷ says that the egoistic man does not know himself, and caring for himself (which is just an illusion) gets destroyed.[32] Kabīr categorically says that as long as one cares for the self, nothing can be achieved, but when 'I' and 'My' are annihilated, then comes the realisation of Hari.[33] Both the saints had attained this knowledge and felt that they themselves were nothing, but the Supreme being was everything. With the utmost humility Kabīr says. 'There is nothing mine in me, whatever is there is only Thine; by surrendering to Thee what is Thine, what do I lose?'[34] Rāmaliṅga Swāmi considers that even his words are not his own but those of his Lord.[35] He asks, 'Who am I, and what knowledge would I have if the 'Siva' himself is not dancing in my blood?'.[36]

The sense of Ego is essentially due to the illusion of Māyā, about which both the saints have elaborately described. It is extremely difficult to get out of the shackles of Māyā. According to Kabīr, Māyā does not leave us even if we leave it, it ens-

32. ....āṇavattil niyāreṉavaṟiyāy............ṉaṉeṉṟu colli nalintaṉaiyē —*Tiru Aruṭpā*, I, P. 76.

33. jab lagi mæⁿ mæⁿ karai, tab lagi kāj ek na sarai, jab yah mæⁿ merā miṭi jāi, tab hari kāj sanvāre āy—*Kabīr Granthāvalī*, P. 205.

34. merā mujh meⁿ kuch nahiⁿ, jo kuch hæ so tor, terā tujh ko saumpte, kā lāgai hæ mor.

35. nāṉuraikkum vārttaiyelām nāyakaṉ taṉ vārttai
naṉuraikkum vārttaiyaṉṟu —*Tiru Aruṭpā*, II, P. 413.

36. nāṉāreṉakkeṉavōr ñāṉavuṇarvētu śivam
ūṉāḍi nillāvūḷi—*Ibid.*, P. 413,

nares us again and again.[37] It is because of the egoistic feeling due to Māyā that we have feelings like honour and respect. Thus honour and respect are themselves Māyā, and when this Māyā leaves, then there is Divine Knowledge.[38] Kabīr considers that Māyā exists everywhere[39] and it entangles even the Gods.[40] Rāmaliṅga Swāmi, in his '*Māyāviḷakkam*', has dealt with the nature of Māyā and the miseries of the soul which is caught in its noose. The goal of spiritual pursuit is to get free from the illusive sense and understand the real nature of the soul and the relation it has with the Cosmic Power.

The acceptance of the basic unity of the Supreme Power and the Soul and a strong longing for re-attaining the union is a fundamental idea in the philosophy of both the saints.

MYSTIC VISIONS

The Ways of Realisation and Mystic Experience

All spiritual pursuits have the aim of realising something beyond the normal worldly truths. The understanding of the Cosmic Truth leads to the liberation of the Soul. In such a state of liberation the Soul feels itself free from all bondages and remains in a condition of sublime peace and tranquility. Various ways have been preferred by various schools of spiritualists to attain this end. Knowledge *(Jñāna)*, physical mortification *(Yoga)* and devotion *(Bhakti)* are the important means adopting which several saints have tried to attain this state of utmost joyousness. The influence of all these are found on Rāmaliṅga Swāmi and Kabīr.

The Path of Knowledge

Both the saints have elaborately described the knowledge that dispels ignorance and gives union with the cosmic power. This knowledge is different from worldly knowledge. So the saints consider the reading of books as futile. If Rāmaliṅga Aḍigaḷ says that all the scriptures make us stagger, and do not give eyes

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37. *Kabīr Granthāvalī*, P. 114.
38. māyā ādar māyā mān, māyā taji brahma giyān—*Ibid.*, P. 114.
39. *Ibid.*, P. 115.
40. Kabīrdās, *Bījak*, St. 59.

to see,[41] Kabīr also declares that reading books and books through years does not make one a scholar, but by learning the few letters of Love one becomes a real scholar.[42]

On attaining the knowledge, the soul feels that it is itself lost, and its place is taken by the Lord. Speaking of this experience, Rāmaliṅga Aḍigaḷ says that his Lord, the Lord of his life, comes and sits in his place and will be in a few hours one with him never to be separated.[43] Kabīrdās speaks of his wonderful experience. 'The Lord in search of whom I went, I have got in this place. The One that is said to be another has become myself.'[44] Giving a concrete simile Kabīr explains, 'Water became ice, the ice melted and became what it was before, and now nothing more is to be said.'[45]

Another result of the realisation is the experience of transcending one's own self, becoming the real Self and feeling one with the whole universal Existence. Rāmaliṅga Swāmi speaks of this condition, 'Oh God, that, being myself, being not myself, becoming the state of I, becoming not the self, becoming one with the cosmic knowledge, existing in the cosmos in a state of silence, grows everywhere.'[46] The miraculous mingling of the microcosmic Soul with the Macrocosm is put in concrete terms by Kabīr thus:

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41. cāttiraṅkaḷllām taṭumāṟṟañcolvataṉṟi
nēttiraṅkaḷ pōṟkāṭṭa nērāvē —*Tiru Aruṭpā*, II, P. 414.

42. pothī paṛhi paṛhi jug bhayā paṇḍit bhayā na koi ḍhayī ākkhar prem kā paṛhe so paṇḍit hoi.

43. eṉ cāmi eṉatu turai eṉṉuyir nāyakamē
iṉṟu vantu nāṉirukkum iṭattilamarkiṉṟār
piṉcārum iraṇṭarai nāḻikaikkuḷḷē yeṉatu
pēruṭampiṟ kalantuḷattē piriyāmaliruppār —*Tiru Aruṭpā*, II, P. 465.

44. jā kāran mæⁿ jāi thā sāī pāī ṭhaur,
soī phir āpan bhayā jāsu kahtā aur —*Kabīr Granthāvali*, P. 15.

45. pāṇī hī te him bhayo, him hvai gayā bilāi,
jo kuch thā soī bhayā, ab kachū kahyā na jāi —*Ibid.*, P. 13.

46. nāṉāki nāṉallaṉāki nāṉē nāṉākum patamāki nāṉṟāṉ kaṇḍa
tāṉāki tāṉallāṉākit tāṉē tāṉākum patamākic cakaca ñāṉa
vāṉāki, vaṉaḍuvil vayaṅkukiṉṟa mauṉa nilaiyāki
yeṅkum valarum tēvē —*Tiru Aruṭpā*, I, P. 106.

A pot in water and water in the pot,
Water within and without;
The pot gets broken, water mingling with water,
The wise one knows the Truth.[47]

The limitless expanse attained thus is not only spatial, but also temporal. The soul crosses the temporal barriers and gets eternal life, as well as sublime enjoyment. Rāmaliṅga Swāmi says, that the Lord has given him such an immortal state. By the fortune of the previous life, he has become immortal and has seen God in his own self,[48] and due to this divine presence he feels that the mortal body will attain immortality and will get supreme joy.[49] Kabīrdās has again and again spoken about this state of immortality. With a sense of pride he says,

'The physician died, the patient died.
Died the whole of the world;
But one Kabīr did not die,
Whose sustain is the Lord.'[50]

Because of his faith, he is able to say with unswerving confidence:

'I will not die, the world will die,
For I have got the One that gives life.[51]

The unique pleasure obtained on reaching this state has been described by Vaḷḷalār in poems like *Ānanda-k-kaḷippu* and *Ānanda mēliṭu.* In several songs written in the style of folk songs[52]

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47. jal men kumbh kumbh men jal hæ, bābar bhītar pānī,
phūṭ kumbh jal jalahi samānā, yah tatth samajhau gyānī
—*Kabīr Granthāvali*, P. 103.

48. 'Māyai nīkkam', St. 1, 4.—*Tiru Aruṭpā,* II, P. 431.
Also cākāta kalviyilē talai kāṭṭikkoṭuttīr—*Ibid.*, II, P. 271.
cākāta varameṉakkē tanta taṉitteyvam—*Ibid.*, II, P. 236.

49. *Ibid.*, II, P. 447.

50. vaid muā rogī muā, muā sakal sansār,
ek kabirā nā muā, jāhi ke rām adhār.

51. mæn na maraun maribo sansārā
ab mohi milio hæ jiyāvanhārā.—*Sant Kabir*, P. 14.

52. pāṅkiyarkkaṟivuṟuttal, *Tiru Aruṭpā*, II, P. 525; Veṇṇilā, *Ibid.*, P. 527, naṭēcar kommi, *Ibid.*, P. 529; aṟputam, *Ibid.*, P. 544; kāṭcikkaṇṇi, *Ibid.*; P. 546; akkacci, *Ibid.*, P. 549 etc.

Vaḷḷalar seems to be in a revelling mood, his heart full to the brim with the pleasure of divine experience. The moment of feeling united with the Lord is a moment of unique pleasure—the great pleasure of Śivānanda.[53] This pleasure is so great that the Lord alone can know it. 'The joy I got in the divine presence, my Lord alone knows, my mother, my Lord alone knows,'[54] says the saint as a bride.

Kabīrdās is so much thrilled with this experience that he asks his mind to dance in joy, and asks the whole universe to join the dance.

> Dance, O my mind, dance in rut,
> Play the tune of love day and night, let all hear,
> Let Rāhu and Kētu and all the planets dance with joy throughout life,
> Let the mountains and oceans and the earth dance,
> Let the world, laughing, weeping, dance.[55]

Realisation through Yoga

Yogic practices have had wide prevalence throughout India, during some earlier periods. The Yogic system essentially consists of controlling of the body and mind and regulating their activities in specific channels, such that the Yogi gets averted from the external world, and turns his senses to his inner self and discovers a world of supreme enjoyment. Some such methods have been mentioned in the Ṛg Veda, Upaniṣads and in the Mahābhārata.[56] However they got systematised by Patañjali in his

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53. kaṉinta śivāṉantameṉum perum pōkattiṉilē
kaḷittiṭa vaittiṭukinṟa kālaiyumituvē.—*Tiru Aruṭpā*, II, P. 464.

54. saṉṉitiyiṟceṉṟu nāṉ peṟṟa pēṟu
sāmiyaṟivāraḍi — ammā
sāmiyaṟivāraḍi—*Tiru Aruṭpā*, II, P. 549.

55. nācu re mere man matta hoi
prem ko rāg bajāy rain din sabda sunai sab koi,
rāhu ketu navagrah nācai janma janma anand hoi,
giri samundar dharti nācai hans roy.—*Kabir Granthāvali*, P. 256.

56. For a detailed study, see in Bibliography Ganesan, S. N., (1975).

Yogasūtra. Thereafter many religious cults have accepted the same as a way of or aid in realisation. The verses of Nāth Panthīs in the north and of Tirumūlar in the south show the strong influence of the yoga system.

Kabīr, like the other poets of the Jñānamārga, has inherited the ideas of Yoga from the saints of the Nāth Panth. He has elaborately described the process of awakening the cosmic power within the body, known as *Kuṇḍalinī* so that it rises up in stages and passes through different *Wheels* (*Çakras*) in the body until at last it reaches the *the Thousand-petalled Lotus* in the brain, which is the centre of cosmic perception. At this stage the soul derives supreme enjoyment to a boundless measure, which Kabīr has elaborately described.[57]

Rāmaliṅga Swāmi has not written any verse about the Yogic method, though the words 'Yōga' and Yōgānta' occur in some pieces. But that he had a knowledge of the system is evident from his prose piece '*Piṇṭānupava laṭçaṇam*'. The long description with reference to *Kuṇḍalinī*, *lotus*, *Kṣīrābdhi* (the Ocean of Milk), different *Agnis* (Fires), *Mānasarōvar* (The Holy Lake of the Mind) etc.,[58] run parallel to the descriptions of Kabīr. So, it is clear that although Vaḷḷalār did not give much importance to the Yogic system, it seems that he was aware of the potentialities of it.

Realisation through Love

The most charming verses of the saint-poets are those in which they approach the Lord through the medium of Love. Knowledge and Yoga are features which raise man above the normal level of thought and perception, and keep him away from the world of emotions. These are generally unapprehendable for the normal man. When the different phases of these are described in verses, they do not enrich the emotional content, which is an essential feature of poetry. Though the quest for God by the saints is inspired by the emotional urge for realisation, the description of

57. *Kabīr Granthāvalī*, Pp. 88, 94.
58. *Tīruvaruṭpirakāśa Vaḷḷalār Upatēśam*, P. 148–154.

the experience obtained by super-knowledge and Yogic process tend to be devoid of emotional charm.

On the other hand, there are many verses of the two saints, in which they have given expression to their emotional attachment towards the Cosmic Power in a somewhat concrete form and have described their mental experiences in various phases of the relation with it. A large number of the verses of these saints are concerned with this emotional attachment or love. In the most intensive state of this attachment, the poets have expressed their ardent feeling for the Master in the form of bridal love.

Libido, which usually manifests itself in the form of love between man and woman, is the most powerful driving force of life. This when directed towards the Supreme Power pervading the Universe, makes the aspirations of man serene and sublime. This is what the poets have done in the verses depicting bridal mysticism. Both Rāmaliṅga Swāmi and Kabīr have described different situations of bridal life.

Here again, as in realisation through Knowledge, the devotee gets near to the Lord through a process of dissolution of the Ego. As long as one is conscious of one's self, and one's desires are directed towards worldly things, there cannot be any union with the Lord. Both the poets have imagined themselves as the bride and the Supreme Power as the bridegroom, with whom they wish to unite. But as long as the Ego exists, this seems impossible. To Rāmaliṅga Swāmi it seems that the Lord appears and urges him to annihilate his self before getting the bridal union.

> " Seeing thyself, look not for Me in thee,
> O, girl that wanders after worldly glee!
> See Me," says the Lord O, mother,
> And takes my hand O, my mother.[59]

59. uṉṉai-p-pārttuṉṉuḷḷē yennai-p-pārātē
ūraippāittōṭiyuḷalkiṉṟa peṇṇē
eṉṉaippāreṉkiṉṟāreṉṉaṭiyammā,
eṉ kai piṭikkiṉṟāreṉṉaṭiyammā.—*Tiru Aruṭpā*, II. P. 290.

In the same tune Kabīr also describes how he loses himself and unites with the divine Lover.

Such is my beloved Lover's charm,
That his charm pervades everywhere,
And when 'I' went to see that charm,
Myself became the charming lover.[60]

The ardent love of the devotees make them feel that they are united with the Lord by a spiritual marriage. Kabīr has given a grand picture of his marriage in which the Lord comes as the bridegroom, the five senses come as wedding guests, and the Soul as the bride in full bloom of youth gets married on the altar of physical existence and submits itself completely.[61] In a state of intense love Kabīr feels that he cannot live without the divine Lord.[62] Rāmaliṅga Aḍigaḷ also has similar experiences. At the most intense state of his passionate love, he feels every moment that the Lord comes to take the hands of his beloved bride, who is himself, while playing, while adorning herself, while singing in praise of the lover and while talking with her playmates.[63] The love is so strong that the devotee as a bride feels fully confident that the Lord is coming. The bridegroom appears to tell her that her wedding with Him is imminent, and asks her to be conscious about the supreme status she is to be elevated to.[64] '*Cilatā-camvātam*'[65] is a highly emotional poem, in which the bride tells her maid-companion how she has shared the pleasures of the nuptial bed with the Lord.

Both the poets have made passionate exposition of the different stages of their marital love, both in union and in separation, which deserves a more intensive study.

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60. lāli mere lāl kī jit dekhūn tit lāl
lāli dekhan mæn gayī mæ bhī hogayī lāl., K. G., P. 94.

61. *Kabīr Granthāvalī*, P. 87.

62. *Ibid.*, P. 125.

63. *Tiru Aruṭpā*, II, P. 290 ff.

64. *Ibid.*, II. P. 291.

65. *Tiru Aruṭpā*, Part II.

Thus we find, that these saint-poets belonging to two different schools of philosophy, show many conceptual parallels in their philosophical and devotional ideas. Though coming in separate traditions, there are some significant similarities in their concept of God, the ways and means of attaining realisation and the experiences they have obtained on attaining the supreme state of divine bliss. A wider and deeper study will reveal that several philosophical ideas and spiritual concepts had been accepted by various religious cults in different parts of India either through traditional inheritance or through mutual contacts, and these great saints have assimilated many such basic concepts, but have at the same time amply shown their strong individuality.

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SOME ASPECTS OF THE MUSIC OF THE ANCIENT TAMILS

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The music that was practised in the Dravidian eountry in the early Christian era represents a magnificient system with a well laid foundation in the theoretical and artistic aspects. The soundness of any evolved system is easily borne out by the existence of a number of scientific literature on the theory and practice of the subject. It is indeed a heartening feature that references are found to a series of regular treatises on music, dance and drama as nurtured and developed by the ancient Tamils even before the Christian era. The irretrievable loss of most of these works is unfortunate as these contain the earliest material regarding the *Ancient Tamil Music, which represents some of the oldest music of India.* Since theoretical writing pre-supposes a large amount of practice prior to it, the existence of a flourishing system of music and dance with a variety of musical instruments in the Dravidian country at a surprisingly early period is an established phenomenon. The valuable reference in the Nāṭya Śāstra[1] to the intense musical and dance activity of the Southern Region, beyond the Vindhya mountains is to be recalled here. The vast ancient literature on music and dance in Tamiḻ includes the following viz. *Perunārai, Peruṅgurugu, Pañchabhāratīyam, Bharatam, Agattiyam, Muruval Śayandam, Guṇanūl, Sevitriyam, Iśainuṇukkam, Indrakāḷīyam, Pañchamarabu, Bharata sēnāpatīyam Kūṭṭanūl, Nāḍagatamiḻ* and others. Commentaries for some of the works were written later and these throw valuable light on the music of their times. Besides, the regular works on music, treatises on dance and drama have chapters on music

1. Nātya Sāstra - Kāśi Edn. Chap. XIV. 37.

treated as an adjunct to them. Further, references to music, in its scientific and practical aspects are scattered throughout the literature dating from the period of Tolkāppianār (3rd cent. B.C.), which includes the famous lexicons like *Sēndan's Divākaram*[2] and *Piṅgaḷa nighaṇṭu.*[3] These references throw useful light on the nature of music and its place in the life of the Tamils in general. In the absence of many of the priceless literature mentioned earlier, the only available source that we have to look for authentic scientific material on *Tamiḻ iśai* is *Silappadikāram*[4] of *Ilangō aḍigaḷ*, which is one of the classical works of the Saṅgam period.

The uniqueness of the genius of the Tamils is seen in the conception of the language as Muttamiḻ (முத்தமிழ்), comprising *Ilakkiya Tamiḻ*, *Iśai Tamiḻ* and *Nāḍaga Tamiḻ* each having distinguishable characteristics regarding the musical quality and grammatical rules. It is true that a language undergoes certain modifications in style and expression with reference to the context and its significance. In the Isai Tamiḻ, the language has been adapted wholly for the purpose of music and, this fact derives support from the important reference in Sēndan's Divākaram (Section on sound), to the use of seven long vowels for singing the music of the seven svaras.

"ஆ ஈ ஊ ஏ ஐ ஓ ஔ வெனும்
இவ்வேழெழுத்தும் ஏழிசைக்குரிய"

In the previous verse, the author enumerates the Tamiḻ names of the seven svaras and their equivalent solfa letters as found in the Sanskrit texts.

"குரலே துத்தம் கைக்கிளை யுழையே
இளியே விளரி, தாரமென் றிவை, ஏழுவகை
யிசைக்குப் பெயரே"

"சவ்வும் ரிவ்வும் கவ்வும் மவ்வும் பவ்வும் தவ்வும்
நிவ்வும் என்றிவை ஏழுமவற்றின் எழுத்தே யாகும்"

2. Edited by K. Lōganātha Mudaliār—1904.
3. Śaiva Śiddhānta Publications—1968, p. 203.
4. Edited by N. M. Venkatasāmi Nāttar—1968.

As the full names of the svaras cannot be used as such in practical music, the mnemonic solfa letters, which are actually the initial syllables of the svara names, were thought of. The *Nārada Parivrājaka upanishad* which belongs to the pre-Christian era mentions for the first time the use of solfa syllables, sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha and ni for the seven svaras. But the *device of singing the seven svaras using the long vowels instead of the consonants by the Tamils, is most unique from the melodic point of view.* And this fact is not referred to as such in the Sanskrit literature on music.

Further, Tolkāppiam[5] makes a significant statement that the seven long vowels viz. ā, ī, ū, ō, aī, ō, and āw, occur as one syllable, independent words having two matras each, while the five short vowels a, i, u, e, o can never figure as words by themselves.

அளப்பிறந்திசைத்தலும் ஒற்றிசைநீடலும்
உளவெனமொழிய இசையொடு சிவணிய
நரம்பின் மறைய என்மனார் புலவர்

(தொல் - எழு. 33)

It is further stated, that lengthening of vowels and consonants is explained in books on vocal and instrumental music. It can be deduced from this, that music was slowly trying to free itself from the shackles of poetry and drama as early as the period of Tolkāppiam. *The choice of these seven long vowels again to signify the ēzhiśai* or seven svaras, proves the recognition of the superior importance of the vowels over the consonants in the sphere of pure music and reflects the musical genius of the Tamils.

The Svara is also referred to as *iśai, narambu* and *kēḷvi.* Silappadikāram mentions the ancient Tamiḻ names for the seven svaras and, in the *āchiyar kuravai,* these svaras are given the names of gods and goddesses for special reasons.

'' இடைமுது மகளிவர்க்குப் படைத்துக் கோட்பெயரிடுவாள்
குடமுதல் இடமுறையாக்குரல் துத்தம்

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5. Eḻuttadigāram - Sūtra—33–44.

ளைக்கிளை உழை இளி விளரி தாரமென
விருதரு பூங்குழல் வேண்டிய பெயரே"

It is probable that the svaras were originally sung with *akāra*, *ikāra* and only later, the syllables came to be used. According to *Kūttanūl*[6], the svaras s, r, g, m, p, represent Lord Siva, and d, n, s, goddess Pārvati. And the order of seven svaras in the ascent and descent denotes the scale.

"இனம் சரிக ம பதநி நிதபம கரிச என
ஏழுவரியா வழிமுறை இயலும்

(கூ., நூல் செய்யுள் 59)

"சரி கம பதநி நிதபம கரிசா, ததி தொம் நம்
ஜெம் ஜெம் நம் தொம் தித எனும் முதல் வரியும்
புரியும் அச்சரமே. (கூ. நூல். 68 – 69)

Vari and *Puri* here denote ārōhana and avarōhana respectively. *Kōvai* refers to the sequence of the svaras. *Kūttanūl* which is earlier than Aḍiyārkunallār (14th Cent.) contains valuable references to ancient Tamil music in the light of the existing musical practice.

Paṇ: In ancient Tamil music, the connotation of a term depends mostly on the context of its usage. For instance, *iśai* means svara music and *Paṇ* or rāga. The term *Paṇ* denotes the rāga, and also a rāga taking the seven svaras. It is sometimes used in the sense of *yāzh* or harp. *Tiṛam* is a derivative rāga having a lesser number of svaras, and it is of three kinds Panniyatiṛam, Tiṛam and Tirattiṛam, which correspond to the *Shādava* (six note) *Oudava* (five note) and *svarāntara* (four note) scales. All these four varieties of rāgas are referred to sometimes by the general term *Paṇ*. The number of paṇs recognised in ancient Tamil music was 103. Of these, about twenty three have been used by the Tēvārakāras in their hymns. A feature which is quite peculiar to the culture of the Tamils was the classification of music, Paṇs and the musical instruments according to the five pastoral regions and this proves the basic importance of the geographical factor in the life and civilisation of the people.

6. Kūttanūl Sāttanār. Edited by Prof. S. D. S. Yōgiar, (1968).

The five divisions of the land into pastoral regions, viz. (Mullai), hilly region (Kuriñji), arable lands (Marudam), coastal belts (Neydal), and dreary waste (Pālai) have respectively the following paṇs namely *Sevvazhi yāzh*, *Yama yāzh*, *Maruda yāzh*, *Neydal yāzh* or *Tiranil yāzh* and *Pālai yāzh*. The Pālai yāzh gives rise to the seven generic scales by the process of model shift of tonic (*Kural-iḻi krama*) namely the *Sempālai*, *Padumalai palai sevvazhi*, *arumpālai*, *kōḍippālai*, *vilarippālai* and *merchempālai*. The four big paṇs each admitting of four varieties of *ahanilai*, *puṛanilai*, *arugiyal* and *perugiyal* are expanded to sixteen. A total of 21 tirams is got from the four paṇs pālai yāzh (5), Sevvazhi (4), Kuriñji (8) and Marudam (4) and each again admitting of four, yield 84 paṇs, which in addition to the 16, give a total of hundred paṇs.

Three more paṇs are added to these, to make the number into 103 paṇs.

In the treatment of Kural-ilikrama we come across some important technical terms in vogue in ancient musicology. The *ninṛanarambu* is the basis or starting note or string of the *yāzh* *Kiḷai* is the fifth note from the starting note and is consonant in effect when played with the first note. *Natpu* is the fourth from the basic string. *Pagai* is the third and the sixth notes and is inimical producing a repulsive effect. *Inai* is the second and the seventh notes. *Kiḷai* and *Natpu* refer to the consonances of the fifth and fourth respectively, known as *Samvāditya* of sa-pa and sa-ma. *Pagai* refers to the *vivādi* svara and *iṇai*, the *anuvādi*. The interval of fourth is spoken of as agreeable and producing a blending effect and it is quite significant as all early music including the Vēdic music and the music of the Gregorian chants gave importance to the fourth interval i.e. the descending fifths and the note ma, was even considered '*avinaśi*' or indestructible in scales.

The *Sruti* is known as *alagu* in Tamil music and twenty two srutis are recognised. The following table shows the distribution of 22 alagus among the seven strings of the *yazh* and the resultant scales.

DISTRIBUTION OF 22 ALAGUS IN THE SEVEN PAṆS

	Name of the Pālai	S	R	G	M	P	D	N	Equivalent mūrchanas	Equivalent Karnātic rāgas
1.	Sempālai	4	4	3	2	4	3	2	Matsarīkruta	Harikāmbhoji
2.	Padumalai pālai	4	3	2	4	3	2	4	Śuddha Shadja	Naṭabhairavi
3.	Sevvazhi	3	2	4	3	2	4	4	Uttarāyatā	Tōdi with untrue fifth
4.	Arumpālai	2	4	3	2	4	4	3	Rajani	Dhira Śankarā-bharaṇa
5.	Koḍippālai	4	3	2	4	4	3	2	Uttaramandra	Kharaharapriya
6.	Vilarippālai	3	2	4	4	3	2	4	Abhirudgata	Hanumatōḍi
7.	Mērchempālai	2	4	4	3	2	4	3	Aśvakranta	Mechakalyāṇi

A comparative study of the paṇs and the rāgas as dealt with in the early Sanskrit texts in particular, reveals remarkable mutual influences between the two systems. Some of the Tēvāra paṇs were also known as rāgas and for example may be mentioned the paṇs, the *nāṭṭa rāga, pazham takka rāga, nāga rāga, takka rāga* and *takkēśi raga.* It is interesting again to note that paṇs and rāgas were distinguished by naming them after the region and language as well. For instance, the following names are self explanatory viz. *Āriya varāti, Drāviḍa, Dakshiṇa Gurjari, Drāviḍa Gurjari, Panchama Kāmbhōji, S'āyaveḷarkolli, Drāvati, Drāviḍa bhāsha, Gandhārapanchamam, Dēvāra vardhani, Mēgharāga Kuriñji* and so on. Rāgas that were probably well known in the Dravidian country or perhaps indigenous to it, were signified in the Sanskrit works with the prefix *drāviḍa* added to their names and *vice versa.* The names of some of the Tēvāra paṇs bear the Sanskrit influence, for instance *kouśika, Indala, Gāndhāra, takka, takkēsi* (same as *takka kaiśika), Nāṭṭa* (Naṭa), *Naṭṭapādai* which is a bhasha of *Nāṭa, Panchama, Gandhārapanchama* and *kolli* (Same as *golli*). Of the various names, *puranīrmai, kuriñji, sevvazhi, S'enturutti, Kollikkauvānam, piyanḍai* and *piyandai gāndāram* are indigenous.

	Paṇ	*Equivalent Karnātic Rāga*
1.	Kolli	Navaroj
2.	Śīkāmaram	Nādanāmakriya
3.	Śevvazhi	Yadukula kāmbhoji
4.	Kouśikam	Bhairavi
5.	Panchamam	Āhiri
6.	Śendurutti	Madhyamāvati
7.	Vyāzhakuriñji	Sourāshtra
8.	Takkēśi	Kāmbhōdi
9.	Gāndhārapanchamam	Kēdāragoula
10.	Pazhampañjuram	Sankarābharana
11.	Sadāri	Pantuvarāḷi
12.	Puranīrmai	Bhūpaḷa with antara gāndhāra
13.	Megharāga kuriñji	Nilāmbari
14.	Āndālikkuriñji	Sāma

Paṇ	*Equivalent Karnatic Rāga*
15. Pazhamtakka rāga	Ārabhi
16. Indalam	Mālavagoula or Nādanāmakriya
17. Naṭṭa pādai	Gambhīra nāta
18. Mullai	Mohanam

A palm leaf manuscript[7] dated Kollam 917, 1742 A. D. preserved in the Tiruvāduturai Mutt, has identified the following paṇs with some of the Karnātic rāgas popular at that time and this list is at slight variance with the practice available today.

THE PAGAL PAṆS (10) பகல் பண்கள்

Names of the Paṇs.	*Equivalent rāgas*
1. Puṛanīrmai	Śri Kanti
2. Gāndhāram and Piyandai Gāndhāram	Ichichi (same as Hejjujji)
3. Kauśika	Bairavi
4. Indaḷam (Tirukkuruntogai)	Neḷitapanchami
5. Takkēśi	Kāmbōdi
6. Naṭṭa rāga, Sadāri	Pantuvarāḷi
7. Naṭṭa pāḍai	Nāṭṭaikuruñji
8. Pazham pañjuram	Sankarābharaṇam
9. Gāndhārapanchamam	Kēdāragoula
10. Panchamam	Āhiri

THE IRAVUPPAṆS (8) இரவுப் பண்கள்

11. Takka Rāga	Kannaḍa Kāmbodi
12. Pazham takka rāga	Suddha sāveri
13. Śīkāmara (same as Śri Kāmara)	Nādanāmakriya
14. Puranīrmai	Nērtiram
15. Kollikauvānam	Padumalai
16. Tiruviruttam	Pālaiyāzh
17. Kuriñji	Aratru
18. Sendurutti	Śentiram
19. Tiruneriśai	Naṭṭam.

7. கொல்லம் 917 ஸூ துன்முகி ஸூ மாசி மீ 4உ எழுதி முடிந்தது.

Certain types of verses are sung in specific paṇs. *Tiruvāśagam* is sung in Mōhana rāga, *Tiruttāṇḍagam* in Harikāmbhoji, *Tirunērisai* in Kolli (Navaroj), *Tiruviruttam* in Kouśikam (Bhairavi) and pazham pañjuram. *Tiruviśaippa* is mostly rendered in ānanda bhairavi rāga, though the following paṇs viz. natta rāga, puranīrmai, sālarapāni, gāndhāra pañchamam, and Indalam, have been prescribed in the texts. *Nēriśai*, *Tirukkuruntogai*; and *viruttam* are not paṇs but are only verse forms. Paṇs are also named after certain type of metrical verses and special circumstances. For instance, *Yāzhmūrippaṇ* is the name given to the rain producing paṇ, *mēgharāga kuriñji* (Nīlāmbari) following the incident of Tirunīlakaṇṭa yāzhpāṇar's failure to play faithfully the 'மாதர் மடப்பிடியும்' padigam of Gnānasambandar that led to the consequent breaking of the yāzh. *Tiruttālachadippadigam* is a metrical verse rendered in viyāzhakkuriñji. Indalam, Sādāri, and Naṭṭapādai are referred to as Tiruvi rāgam. Rules regarding the hour and part of the day in which paṇs are to be sung have been prescribed. These are classified as *Irāppaṇ*, *Pagalpaṇ* and *Poduppaṇ*.[8] *Marudam* is to be sung in the morning, *Sevvazhi* in the evening, *Kuriñji* at midnight, while *Puranīrmai* is the early morning rāga sung at dawn. (பள்ளியெழுச்சி). Of the 24 paṇs, 12 were pagal paṇs, 9 iravuppaṇs and poduppans are 3. The *pagalpaṇs* are intended to be sung during day time and these are:— *Puranīrmai, gāndhāram Piyandai gandhāram, naṭṭa rāga, naṭṭapādai Pazhampañjuram, Pañjamam, Indalam Kauśikam, takkēsi, Sādāri,* and *Gāndhārapañchamam.* Paṇs to be sung at night time or *iravuppaṇs* are namely: *takka rāga, pazhamtakka rāga, Sīkāmaram, Kolli, Kollikakavanam, Viyāzhakkuriñji, Kuriñji, Mēgharāga kuriñji* and *Āndālikkuriñji.* Sevvazhi, Sendurutti and Tiruttāndagam (Harikāmbhōji) are podupaṇs which can be sung at all times.

Āḷatti:— Ālāpana is known as *āḷatti* in Tamil music. The musical sound which emanates from the Mūlādhāra is referred to as *āḷatti* and is also called *iśai* and *paṇ*. As the āḷatti is produced in the eight sthānas or positions like tongue, nose, lips and

8. Equivalant to the chandrāmśa, suryāmśa and sarvakālika rāgas explained in the Sanskrit texts.

teeth by the eight kriyas of *eḍuttal, paḍuttal, nalidal, kampitam, kutilam, oli, uruttu* and *tākku*, it is known as paṇ. The eleven characteristic features of a paṇ correspond to the *daśavida rāga lakshana* explained in Sanskrit books and these are முதல், முறைமை, முடிவு, நிறைவு, குறைவு, கிழமை, வலிவு, மெலிவு, சமன், வரையறையும் நீர்மை Āḷatti is done with the aid of five short vowels and five long vowels.[9] Of the 18 consonants, only the 3 letters, ம, ந, and த are used for performing āḷatti and the rest are not considered fit. Starting with the consonant ம, the music of the āḷatti is developed using long and short vowels. According to *Kūttanūl*, āḷam (ஆளம்) and Nāḷam (நாளம்) constitute āḷatti in music "ஆளமும் நாளமும் ஆளத்தி என்ப" (*சூத்திரம் 28*). The ascending sequence of seven svaras viz. s r g m p d n is called நேர் ஆளம் and the descending sequence is the நிரைசேர் தாளம். The various movements of svaras in the ascent or descent and also the combinations of svaras into several patterns according to the rules of melody, constitute the āḷatti or elaboration of a pan. *Kūttanūl* speaks of āḷatti in the following verses,

> "குரலே துத்தம் கைக்கிளை உழையே, இளியே விளரி
> தாரம் என்ன, ஏழிசைநேர்நேர் 'இயல் ஆளத்தி"
>
> (சூத்திரம் 30- 31)
>
> "ஏழிசை மற்றிரை ஏல் ஆள்த்தி
> ச ரி க ம ப த நி தான் நேர் ஆளம்
> நி த ப ம ரி சா நிரை சேர் நாளம் (சூத்திரம் 42 - 45)

Adiyārkunallār refers only to *aḷatti* and not to *nāḷatti*. Two kinds of āḷatti recognised are: *āccū* (அச்சு) *Pāraṇai* (பாரணை). The *Accu* is done with tāla and may be said to correspond to the tānam which has an underlying rhythm. *Pāraṇai* is done to the accompaniment of dance or abhinaya. It probably refers to

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9. "குன்றுக்குறில் ஐந்தும் கோடா நெடில் ஐந்தும்
குற்றெழுத்தாலும் நெட்டெழுத்தாலும் ஆளத்தி செய்யப்படும்
என்றவாறு',
"குன்றுக்குறில் ஐந்தும் கோடா நெடில் ஐந்தும் நின்று
ஆர்ந்த மந்தகரம் தவ்வொடு - நன்றாக நீளத்தால் ஏழு
நிதானத்தால் நின்று இயங்க ஆளத்திஆம் என்று அறி"

the variety of dance which is known as *rāga abhinaya*[10] in which abhinaya is performed as accompaniment to raga singing. Āḷatti is again spoken of as of three kind:—*Kāttāḷatti, Niravāḷatti* and *Paṇṇāḷatti* relating respectively to *accu, pāraṇai* and *pan.* Further, the syllables *tenna* and *tena* are utilised in the singing of āḷatti and it is to be noted that Sanskrit texts are silent regarding this musical practice. The present method of rendering ālāpana in Karnātic music with the syllables tarana and tanana may be traced to the tradition of āḷatti exposition practised in ancient Tamiḻ music.

The ancient period in the history of Indian Music has made two priceless contributions namely, the *Vēdic hymns* and the *Tēvāram.* The Tēvāram set in paṇs, constitutes the earliest examples of the music of the ancient period as a whole, that has come down to the present date in a recognisable form. The Nāyanmārs, the authors of those highly devotional hymns, had played a very remarkable role in the evolution of Śaivism in South India. The Nāyanmārs were devotees of Lord Śiva and belonged to all strata of society. In addition to being sterling devotees of the Lord, humble in body and mind alike, they were also poets of a superior order. A volume of devotional hymns, in attractive paṇs and melody and rhythm flowed from their hearts spontaneously, at the divine call, providing fundamental sustenance for all Saivite devotees of all times. The four inspired saints viz. Saint Tirugñāna Sambandar, Appar, Sundaramūrthy and Mānickkavāsagar have sanctified the whole of South India by their songs of devotion and spread the light of spiritual aspiration throughout. The music of the ancient Tamils as was in vogue thousand two hundred years ago is available to us in a somewhat original form in these hymns.

The Tēvāra hymns are rightly termed 'Deyva Pāḍalgaḷ' and the Tamiḻ language as handled in these songs is *Gñāna Tamiḻ* or *Spiritual Tamiḻ*. Being spontaneous effusions of the God-intoxicated souls, they are so full of emotional exhuberance and

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10. Sangita darpana-Chatura Damodhara–Thañjāvur Serfoji Saraswati Mahal Library series, No. 34.

are couched in highly metrical style. In the history of Indian music, the Tēvāram set in a regular rāga (Paṇ) is the earliest example of a musical composition as such. The Vedic hymns were only chanted to certain specific notes and, rāgas as such were not used.

The beautiful combination of poetry and music is of immense aid in the easy memorising of these hymns which run to a voluminous number. The Tēvāram is divided into many padigams, which represent a collection or group of ten to twelve verses. *Pāsuram* is a verse. The following last verse of a Padigam is given below for instance :—

நல்லார்கள் சேர்புகலி ஞானசம்பந்தன்
யெல்லார்களும் பரவுமீசனை யேத்துபாடல்
பல்லார்களும் மதிக்கப் பாசுரஞ் சொன்னபத்தும்

No divisions are found in a Padigam and once it is begun, the stanzas of the Padigam are sung in succession till the end. There is no pallavi or refrain to which the ōduvār (hymn singer) returns at the conclusion of each stanza. The burden of the song which usually contains the main theme, sometimes figures at the end of a verse. For example in Śilappadikāram, the verse in Āychiyar Kuṛavai may be cited :—

பெரியவனை மாயவனைப் பேருலக மெல்லாம்
விரிகமல புந்தியுடைய விண்ணவனைக் கண்ணுந்
திருவடியுங் கையுந் திருவாயுஞ் செய்ய
கரியவனைக் காணாத கண்ணென்ன கண்ணே
கண்ணிமைத்து காண்பார்தங் கண்ணென்ன கண்ணே

We find a similar structure of the composition in the Ashtapadi hymns of Jayadēva. It is the 'burden' of the song which developed into the pallavi section of the later musical compositions. Further, the music of the stanzas in a padigam is same and in this respect, it is a forerunner of all later musical forms such as the Ashṭapadi hymns, Prabhandhas and the Ēkadhātu kirtanas. The *sthala* or *kshētra* mudra, *vāggeyakāra* mudra, and *devata* mudra are introduced in the hymns. Again the tradition of incorporating the signature of the composer in the song, is thus as old as the Tēvāram. The mudra charaṇa of the later

kriti type of composition containing the signature of the composer corresponds to the Tirukkadaikāppu stanza of Gñanasambandar's and Sundarar's Tēvārappadigam. The *Thirukkadaikāppu* is the last stanza that bears the signature of the composer and is intended to provide for the safety and preservation of the the whole padigam.

Music in these hymns is only a vehicle for expressing the sublime experiences of the Nāyanmars. Hence the thought content and the language clothing these ideas are deservedly of supreme significance in these songs. The music, words, and the content, all converge into a harmonious combination, conceived first in the mind of the composers before emerging as a song.

Many rhetorical beauties that adorn the later musical compositions in different languages are seen in the Tēvāram hymns in quite a large number. Also, there are in these hymns certain special characteristic embellishments pertaining to the Tamiḻ language, and Tamiḻ poetry. Tirugñānasambandar's hymn in Paṇ *Kouśikam* (Bhairavi) given under, is a fine instance of the beautiful technique known as *Mālai mātru* or the *savyā-apasavya* pattern or vikatakavi design.

யாமாமா நீயாமாமா யாழீகாமா காணாகா
காணாகாமா காழீயா மாமாயா நீமாமாயா (pp. 121-1)

Ramaswamy Dikshitar's song in *Gaṅgātaraniṇi rāga* in Tisra ēkatāla with the words: "*Sārasanayana sarasā*" is composed in *மாலைமாற்று*. Muthuswāmy Dikshitar has also composed songs with this beauty. *Ēkapādam* is another kind of literary beauty met with in Sambandar's hymn in Paṇ Vyāzhakkuriñji. Here the words constituting a line, occur in the three remaining lines of the stanza also.

பிரமபுரத்துறை பெம்மானெம்மான்
பிரமபுரத்துறை பெம்மானெமமான்
பிரமபுரத்துறை பெம்மானெம்மான்
பிரமபுரத்துறை பெம்மானெம்மான்[11]

11. *Ibid.* p. 147.

The interesting feature known as *koṇḍukūṭṭi* (கொண்டுகூட்டி) is come accross in the Tēvāram, *Aduttānai* in paṇ sevvazhi, (yadukulakāmbhōji rāga—triputa ṭāla) is cited below.

கொடுத்தானை
பதம் கொடுத்தானை
பாசு பதம் கொடுத்தானை
அர்ச்சுனர்க்கு பாசு பதம் கொடுத்தானை
யுரித்தானை அர்ச்சுனர்க்கு பாசு பதம் கொடுத்தானை
அடுத்தானை யுரித்தானை அர்ச்சுனர்க்கு பாசு பதம் கொடுத்தானை

Similar instances are found in the kritis of Muthuswāmy Dīkshitar. For instance, the following may be cited from '*Tyāgarāja yōga vaibhavam*' in *Ānanda bhairavi rāga.*

Śām
prakāśam
svarūpa prakāśam
tatva svarūpa prakāśam
sakala tatva svarūpa prakāśam
Śiva śaktyādi sakala tatva svarūpa prakāśam

The length of the line is gradually increased without affecting the meaning and this is referred to as śrotovaha yati in Sanskrit. Another kind of rhyme recognised in rhetorics is *yamakam.* Identical words or syllables, but different in meaning figure in a section or sections of a composition. This is called மடக்கு in Tamiḻ. The Tēvāram of Sambandar in Pazham Pañjuram is an example:

உற்றுமை சேர்வது மெய்யினையே
உணர்வது நின்னருள் மெய்யினையே
கற்றவர் காய்வது காமனையே
கனல்விழி காய்வது காமனையே
அற்றம் மறைப்பதும் உன்பணியே
பெற்றும் உகந்தது கந்தனையே
பிரமபுரத்தை உகந்தனையே[12]

A parallel example is found in the kriti "*mānasa mana sāmarthya mana sāmarthyamēmi*" in vardhani rāga, in which the word

12. *Ibid.* pp. 162–1.

Manasā occurs in different meanings, as the words, மெய்யினையே, காமனையே, உன்பணியே, கந்தனையே in the above hymn. Alliteration known as Anuprāsa in Sanskrit, is come across in many hymns. The following example of Sambandar in paṇ *Sadāri* may be cited and later Sanskrit poetry particularly the ashtapadi hymns of Jayadēva contain beautiful alliterations.

நிராமய பராபர புராதன பராவு சிவராக வருளென்
றிராவும திராயது பராதினை புராணன மராதி பதியாம்
அராமிசை யிராதொழில் தராயர பராயண் வராக வுருவா
தராயனை விராயெரி பராய்மிகு தராய்மொழி விராயபதியே[13]

This padigam is called *vazhimozhithiruvirāgam* (வழிமொழித் திருவிராகம்). The second letter rhyme known as *Yadugai* or prāsa is the special feature of these hymns and is not found in the ashtapadi hymns which contain only antya and anuprāsa. Ambāshtakam and portions of Lingāshtakam of Adi Sankara have the beauty of prāsa. The first hymn of Sambandar in Naṭṭapāḍai which he composed at the age of three immediately after receiving the Divine blessings is replete with this beauty.

தோடுடைய செவியென் விடையேறி ஓர்தூவெண்மதிசூடி
காடுடைய சுடலைப்பொடு பூசியென் னுள்ளங் கவர்கள்வன்
ஏடுடைய மலரான் முனை நாட்பணிந்தேத்த அருள்செய்த
பீடுடைய பிரமாபுர மேவிய பெம்மான் இவனன்றே.

The Tēvaram hymns can be rendered individually and by a group of devotees also. The poetic form of these hymns with their rhetorical embellishments afford scope for easy and collective delivery.

திருத்தமாந்திகழ் காழிஞான சம்பந்தன் செப்பியசெந்தமிழ்
ஒருத்தராகிலும் பலர்களாகிலும் உணரசெய்வார் உயர்ந்தார்களே[14]

Another interesting feature is that, a number of padigams have been composed in one and the same paṇ and the music of each padigam is set in a different tune in the paṇ. This is referred to as *Kaṭṭalai.* The various facets of a paṇ or rāga are revealed by the many kaṭṭalai or varṇameṭṭu in

13. *Ibid.* pp. 159-6.

14. *Ibid.* pp. 274-7.

varied rhythmic settings or musical tunes existing in it. Since the hymns are mainly products of divine inspiration, it is natural that the several padigams in the *same rāga* are not found in the same *varṇameṭṭu* and rhythmic structure or tune in the rāga. The treatment of the same pan in the different padigams is hence varied. It will be seen that in the kritis of Tyāgarāja and other great composers, in the same rāga, the musical as well as rhythmic structure is not repeated, but exhibits modifications in the handling of the rāga within each composition. The musical potentiality of a paṇ is thus revealed by the existence of the various melodic and rhythmic treatments of it in the compositions. It is highly surprising that this fundamental truth is manifested in the Tēvāram hymns. In all spontane ous creations, the musical handling of the theme, the rhythmic form and the spiritual and artistic experience of the composer are always in perfect consonance with the emotional state of the mind of composer at the time of the composition.

Of the four Nāyanmārs, Sambandar has handled as many as twenty-four paṇs, Appar, ten paṇs, and Sundaramūrti seventeen paṇs. In the paṇ Indalam, there are 39 padigams, in Sādāri, 33 padigams and so on. It may be pointed out that saint Tyāgaraja composed more than 30 kritis in Tōdi rāga each in a distinct varṇameṭṭu.

The *phala sruti* so characteristic of charitra kīrtanas, yakshagānam, dramas and kālakshēpams enumerating the beneficial effects of reciting, listening and witnessing the enactment, is introduced in the padigams of Sambandar: for instance, the following in praise of the deity of Śirkāḷi in paṇ viyazhakuṛiñji may be mentioned.

ஞானசம்பந்தன் ஞானத்தமிழ் நன்குணரச்
சொல்லிடல் கேட்டல் வல்லோர் தொல்லை வானவர் தங்களோடும்
செல்குவர் சீரருளாற் பெறலாஞ் சிவலோகமதே[15]

Adiyarkkunallār's commentary on Silappadikāram refers to works on tāḷa and unfortunately these are not available to posterity. References to *Tāḷavottu* (தாளவொத்து), and *Karaṇavottu* (கரணவொத்து) are found and important details relating to the

15. *Ibid*. pp. 146-11.

subject of tala from these works are however alluded to in the commentary.

Rhythm is the other inherent element of music. In Tamil music, rhythm is called *Pāṇi* and it is of four kinds viz. *Koṭṭu, aśai, tūkku* and *aḷavu* (கொட்டு, அசை, தூக்கு, அளவு). Koṭṭu is equal to half of mātra (two aksharas) and is indicated with the symbol க. Aśai has one mātra (four aksharas) and bears the sign ள. Tūkku is denoted by the symbol உ and has two mātras (8 aksharas). Aḷavu has three mātras (12 aksharas) and the sign ∴. Unit time is known as akshara in music. A mātra is equal to four units.

		Equivalent Sanskrit Name	*Duration*		*Symbol*
1.	Koṭṭu	drutam	2 aksharas	half a mātra	க
2.	Aśai	laghu	4 aksharas	one mātra	ள
3.	Tūkku	guru	8 aksharas	two mātras	உ
4.	Aḷavu	plutam	12 aksharas	three mātras	∴

The symbols and signs prescribed for these angās of the tāla in the work called *Talasamuttiram*[16] are slightly different.

விராம வுருப்புள்ளி மெய்த்துரிதம் வட்டம்
இராம சரமிலகு ஏந்தும்-இராமன்கை
வில்லுக் குருப்புலிதம் மின்காகு வென்றுரைக்கில்
அல்லுக்கியல் புல்லடி (தா. ச. 10. 22)

But in actual practice, the following symbols are used.

	Duration		*Symbol*
1.	¼ mātra	1 akshara	◡̇
2.	½ mātra	2 akshara	O
3.	1 mātra	4 akshara	1
4.	2 mātra	8 akshara	4
5.	3 mātra	12 akshara	2, 3
6.	4 mātra	16 akshara	1 +

Tāla regulates the flow of music and is the basic formative element of dance.

16. Tāla samuttiram—Tanjore Maharaja Serfoji Saraswati Mahal Library Series No. 50. 1955 p. 95.

"ஆட்டமும் பாட்டமும் அளவிடும் தாலே (கூ. தா. நூ. 2)
"தாளம் கரையே" (கூ. தா. நூ. 3)
"தாளம் பிறந்தது தண்ணுமை (கூ. தா. நூ. 3)

It remains as a boundary for both music and dance. The twelve modes of measuring time have been mentioned in keeping with the exigencies of the art of dance and these are—

"ஒற்றல் உறுத்தல் வலித்தல் மெலித்தல் தட்டல்
அடித்தல், தாவல், தாடில், விரல்மடி, விரவல்
விச்சிறை நிரவல் எனப் பன்னிரண்டே வினைச்செயல் என்ப.
(கூ. தா. நூ. 7)

Adiyarkunallār mentions in his commentary on Arangētrukkādai about forty one tālas inclusive of ēka tāla, parvatilōchana and others as belonging to purakkūttu while tālas such as ஆறன்மட்டம், எட்டன்மட்டம், தாளருவாரியல், தனிநிலையொரியல், ஒன்றன்பாணி and others are used in akakuttu. Kūttanul[17] refers to the famous seven tālas and also the thirty-five tāḷas, which have become very popular in the music of later period. The tālas with their equivalent present names are given below:

	Names as given in Kūttanūl	*As found in Tāla Samuttiram (anubandam)*	*Equivalent names in Karnātic music*
1.	Ēkam ஏகம்	Ēkam	Ēka
2.	Aḍai அடை	Aḍantai	Aṭa
3.	Mūvaḍai முவடை	Thiruviḍai	Tiripuṭa
4.	Thiṇṇam திண்ணம்	Sampai	Jhampa
5.	Uruvam உருவம்	Rupagam	Rupakam
6.	Maṭṭiyam மட்டியம்	Maṭṭayam	Maṭyam
7.	Thuḷai துளை	Thugam	Dhruvam

The popularity of the seven tālas or sapta tālas prior to the period of Adiyārkunallār is evident from the treatment of them in Kūttanūl. It must be conceded that long before the period of Purandaradās, the famous sapta tālas must have been in prevalence in the South under different names.

17. Kūṭta Nūl—Tāla Nūl—Sūtra 68-78.
Sūtra 82-173.

The aḍavukkūttu is to be rendered in these seven tālas in the five varieties of *chaturam* (i. e. *chaturasram*), *tirasam* (*tisram*), *miduram* (*misram*), *kandam* (*Khandam*) and *sankaram* (*sankīrṇam*).

> "ஏழ்தாளத்து இணைஇருவகை இயலும்
> தாள்அடிகற்பார் தம்முதல் அடவே" (தா. நூ. சூ. 178)

Other tālas used in aḍavukkūttu are *araṅga tālam*, *vanna sigaram*, *Kōdari*, *muzhanari* and so on. Āttam (ஆட்டம்) refers to pure *nṛitta* or śuddha nṛitta or *śokkam* (சொக்கம்), which is mainly based on rhythm or tāla and footwork. Paṭṭam (பட்டம்) is the nritya which is based on rāga and is capable evoking rasa. Āditāla was known as (அச்சரம்) *accharam.*

> சரிகமபதநி நிதபமகரிசா, ததிதொம்நம்
> ஜெம்ஜெம்நம் தொம்தித, எனும்முதல்வரியும்
> புரியும் அச்சரமே. (கூ., நூ. 68).

Similarly other talas like *iccaram* (இச்சரம்) *uccaram* (உச்சரம்), *eccaram* (எச்சரம்), *occaram* (ஒச்சரம்), *darpaṇam* (தர்பணம்), *Çaccari* (சச்சரி), *simhalla* (ஸிம்ஹல்லா), and *Kandarpam* (கந்தர்பம்) are also referred to. The prastara of the tāla known as *Viruṅgiyam* (விருங்கியம்) is explained with the letters constituting the *panchākshara* which result in the total of one hundred and twenty varieties. It runs as follows:

> நமசிவய, வயநசிவயநம, வயநமசி, யநமசிவ
> நமவசிய, மசியவந, சிவநயம
> வயமவசி, யநசிமவ, நமயவசி, மசிநயவ
> சிவமநய, வயசிநம, யநவசிவ, நமவயசி
> மசியநவ, சிவநமய, வயமசிந, யநசிவம
> நமயசிவ, மசிவநய, சிவயநம, வயநசிம etc.

In the place of the syllables 'Namaśivāya' the seven svaras are used for illustrating the prastāra which is given next. Appropriate jathis are sung to these svaras. Thus the use of the *panchkshara, mantra* svaras and jathi for illustrating the prastāra krama of the tāla, *Viruṅgiyam* is remarkable. The dance known as aḍavukkūttu (அடவுக்கூத்து) has its very basis in the rhythmic structure. Pērani is a type of rhythmic dance which is performed on sand specially spread on the stage, and covered with a piece

of white muslin cloth. At the end of the dance, on account of the peculiar aḍavus and rhythmic movements of the dancer, the figures of lion, lotus, serpent, chariot, elephant and other pictures are seen to be drawn beautifully on the sand. Special tālas are mentioned for the dances, which result in the drawing of the various figures. The five talas known as *Kuharam* (குஹாரம்), *Āriya Kuharam* (ஆரியகுஹாரம்), *Kuharapuliyam* (குஹாரப்புலியம்), *Kuhara śigaram* (குஹாரசிகரம்) are prescribed for dancing the drawing of the figures of tiger and lion. These tālas are referred to in Sanskrit as *Simha vikraman, Simha vikrīditam, Vyāghravikriditam* and *Simha nandana.* These tālas belong to the list of 108 tālas.

	Name of the tāla	*Equivalent name in the Sanskrit text*	*Total number of Aksharas*
1.	Kuharam	Simha vikramam	64 aksharas or 16 mātras
2.	Āriya Kuharam	...	76 aksharas of 19 mātras
3.	Kuhara Puliyam	Vyāghra vikrīditam	68 aksharas or 17 mātras
4.	Kuhara Pidaram	Simhanadam or Simhavikrīditam	32 aksharas or 8 mātras
5.	Kuhara śikaram	Simhanandana	128 aksharas or 32 mātras
6.	Annam	Hamsa leela	9 aksharas or 2¼ mātras
7.	Iśai annam	Hamsanadam	32 aksharas or 8 mātras

The tālas[18] that are utilised for the type of feminine dance known as *Varikkūttu,* are generally referred to as belonging to *ratiyam* (ரதியம்) a class of time measures. These tālas and śolkaṭṭu passages in them are soft and composed of mild musical patterns. The following are the six tālas :—

18. Kūttanūl—Togainūl pp. 342-346.

Name of the tālas	Total duration
1. Rati	12 Akku or 3 alagu
2. Rati uḷḷāḷam	24 Akku or 6 alagu
3. Ratiyattu aḷangam	44 (11 alagu)
4. Ratiyakkaraṇam	8 (2 alagu)
5. Rati madanam	12 (3 alagu)
6. Ratiya kriyam	144 (36 alagu)

Akshara or unit time is denoted as akku and akkaram. Alagu is equal to one māttirai which consists of four aksharas.

Certain tālas have been prescribed for use in the śāḷaya dances (சாலையம்) which are intended for warfare and these are termed *Kotram* (கொற்றம்) type of tālas. Seven such tāḷas are mentioned.

	Name of the tāḷa	*Equivalent names in Sanskrit texts*	*Total duration Akshara*	*— Alagu*
1.	Kottrattiru	Jaya Śrī	32	8
2.	Kottrattinbam	Vijayanandam	32	8
3.	Kotram	Jayam	40	10
4.	Kotrappugaram	Kīrti	48	12
5.	Vinnakkotram	Vijayam	40	10
6.	Kotrappugazh	Śri kīrti	24	6
7.	Kotrakkotram	Jayadharam	36	9

These seven tālas are noted for the majesty, vigour and are capable of evoking vīra or heroic feeling.

The twelve dances of Lord Śiva are enumerated and from these are said to have developed the later[19] twelve kūttus.

12 tāndavas	*Kūttus*
Alliyam (அல்லியம்)	Adavu
Elliyam (எல்லியம்)	Iśai vazhi
Palliyam (பல்லியம்)	Avinayam
Uḷḷam (உள்ளம்)	Chārikai

19. The eleven kūttus enumerated in the commentary as on Silappadikāram are *Kodukotti, Pāndaraṅgam, Alliyam, Tuḍi, Kuḍai, Markūttu, Kudakkūttu, Pēdikkūttu, Marakkāl kūttu, Pāvaikkūttu* and *Kadaiyam.*

12 tāndavas	*Kūttus*
Nudal vizhi (நுதல்விழி)	Pērani
Nōkkam (நோக்கம்)	Ōviyam
Nuṇukkam (நுணுக்கம்)	Paravai
Kālvari (கால்வரி)	Śalayam
Kaḷitruvari (களிற்றுவரி)	Arasam
Pēy vari (பேய்வரி)	Pattam
Naççam (நச்சம்)	Pittam
(Bhujaṅga tāndavam)	

It is remarkable that only certain type of tālas are used for certain dances and just as rāgas are classified according to their utility for various types of compositions and for evoking various rasas or emotional feelings, the tālas have also been prescribed to suit the exigencies of the several kinds of dances, tāndava and lāsya, in Tamiḷ musical and dance treatises.[20]

The *araśakkūttu* involves both *lāsya* and *tāndava.* The tālas that are employed for these dances belong to *Iṛaiyam* (இறையம்) group. These are—

	Tālas	*Aksharas*	*Mātras*
1.	Iraiyam	48	12
2.	Magudattu iraiyam	32	8
3.	Kotrathi iraiyam	32	8
4.	Iraiyattu amaram	16	4
5.	Iraiyattu iyavul	12	3
6.	Iraiyakkomudi	5	$1\frac{1}{4}$
7.	Navamuḍi iraiyam	7	$1\frac{3}{4}$

The dance known as *Pattaśakkuttu* is a kind of pot dance (குடக்கூத்து) described in Śilappadikāram as one of the eleven dances—

" குருத்துக் கதலிக் குடத்தின் மிமிசைகாலும்
விசையுறும் கையும் தட்டி தாலல் பட்டசக்
குடத்தின் தழைவே. (சூ. 378)

20. Kūttanūl - Togai nūl, p. 336.

The tāla that is used for this kūttu is termed *aḍagam* (அடகம்) or *araṅga* (அரங்க) tāla. The aṅgas and the total duration of the tāla are not mentioned in the work.

In later works on Music and Dance, a set of dances styled *Navaśandhi* dances, with special characteristics is enumerated. These are performed during the annual festivals in certain temples, accompanied by compositions and jathis set in ragas and tālas specially known as navasandhi tālas. Since these dances are offered as worship to the nine sandhis on the occasion, tālas used in these navasandhi dances, also came to be referred as *navaśandhi* tālas. The remarkable feature about these dances is the mention of paṇs as well as rāgas for each of the respective nine dances. The following table illustrates the navaśandhi dances, with the tālas, rāgas, paṇs and tāla vādyas:—

No.	Name of the śandhi	Dance	Rāga	Paṇ	Tāla	Angas of tāla	Mātras
1.	Brahma	Kamala nṛtta	Madhyama	Mēgham	Chachatputa	S S I S	(8)
2.	Indra	Bhujaṅga	Velāvali	Gandhāram	Chachatputa	S I I S	(6)
3.	Agni	Maṅgaḷa nṛitta	Varali	Kolli	Utgaṭṭitam	S S S	(6)
4.	Yama	Dandapādam	Gujjari	Kouśikam	Maṭṭayam	I O I	($2\frac{1}{2}$)
5.	Nairuti	Bhujaṅga trāsam	Gowri	Naṭṭapādai	Malla	I I I O δ	($4\frac{1}{4}$)
6.	Varuṇa	Kuñjita or Śaṅka nṛitta	Dēśi	Sīkāmaram	Rāsavardhanam	O O O I ∪	($2\frac{3}{4}$)
7.	Vāyu	Bhujaṅga lalitam	Makutarāmakri	Takkēsi	Sampai	∪ O O I	($2\frac{1}{4}$)
8.	Kubēra	Sandhya	Srirāga	Takka	Rupaka	O I	($1\frac{1}{2}$)
9.	Iśāna	Bhramarikam	Panchama rāga Desakahi rāga	Panchama or Salāvāni	Ekatālam	I	(1)

To sum up, the study of the important works like Śilappadikāram, with its valuable commentary and other literature related to music and dance, establishes the fact that the principles of the theory of music as embodied in the ancient Tamiḻ works are fundamentally identical with those expounded in the Sanskrit treatises. The basic governing and living concepts have always remained unchanged in the process of evolution and these are given a new interpretation in the light of new experiments and widening of musical and scientific knowledge. The basic concepts of śruti, svara, rāga, laya, musical composition and musical instruments have remained intact since recognisable beginnings of art music. Ancient Tamiḻ music represents the earliest developed form of Indian Music, that was in vogue in the Southern region of our country. Again the scientific principles of the ancient Tamiḻ musical system, Hindustāni and Carnātic Systems are same; the difference is one of dialectical in nature. The theories of seven svaras, twenty two śṛutis, four fold relation of svaras, concepts of rāga, rāga ālāpana, rāga lakshana, tāla and musical forms and other fundamental elements of Indian musical system are found to be similar in these three branches revealing at the same time a common matrix for all the three. The nomenclatures adopted, the forms and styles of expression may however differ in these systems, but the fundamental facts governing the art have continued as ever, which again proves the dynamic unity of the art since its inception. The influence of ancient Tamiḻ music on the development of the later music of India especially on Carnatic music, is remarkably profound and this is reflected in the closest co-operation and exchange of mutual ideas, between the two systems. The past is never really dead, it lives in the evolved, adapted or innovated later forms. The past has a purpose in enlightening and remain relevant to the present and to achieve this, requires an active re-interpretation and re-examination of the facts that are of eternal significance.

THE DATE OF THE TĒVĀRAM TRIO: AN ANALYSIS AND RE-APPRAISAL

BY

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It was the pioneering study of Sundaram Pillay nearly 80 years ago (1895) which first determined the period during which Tirujñānasambandar lived. After an analysis of certain essentially literary sources he concluded that this composer of *Tēvaram* should have lived in the 7th century A. D., a result that has been accepted through all these years as a stabilized fact. On the basis of certain episodes narrated by Sekkiḻār in his Tiruttoṇḍarpurāṇam (Periapurāṇam), Tirunāvukkarasar (Appar) is deemed to be the senior contemporary of Tirujñānasambandar. More specifically, Tirunāvukkarasar is understood to have lived during the regnal years of the Pallava king Mahēndravarman I (A. D. 610-630); it is believed that this composer, who was himself a convert from Jainism to Saivism, caused an identical transformation in Mahēndravarman also. The source for such an inference is in part Sekkiḻār's Periapurāṇam itself and in part, a stone inscription in Samskṛt—which has lent itself to more than one interpretation—incised in the rock-cut cave temple in Tiruchi (SII. I. Nos. 33, 34). Even granting that Mahēndravarman was the donor of this inscription, what it conveys is yet a matter of vagueness and uncertainty. However, that Tirujñānasambandar and Tirunāvukkarasar were contemporaries in the time of Mahēndravarman has been accepted as an accomplished fact. This contention constitutes one of the important foundation stones of the literary, religious, cultural and even political history of Tamiḻ Nāḍu.

The determination of the date of the third of the *tēvaram* singers, Sundarar (Nambi Ārūrar), however, is still a matter of uncertainty. Some authors (Srinivasa Pillai, 1949; Rajamanikkam, 1960; etc.) advocate his placement in the 9th century A.D. while

others (Dorai Rangaswamy, 1958) Vellaivaranan, 1962; Mahalingam, 1969; etc.) make him a contemporary of the Pallava king Narasimhavarman II Rājasimha (A. D. 690/1-728/9) identifying this king with Kādavarkon Kaḻarççiṅgan who figures in Sundarar's *tēvaram.* Thus, the contemporary majority opinion holds that all the three *tēvaram* hymnists lived strictly within the limits of the 7th century A.D. as contemporaries of the Pallava kings from Mahēndravarman I to Narasimhavarman II.

Validity of "Internal" Evidence

The sources that have been employed in determining the age of the *tēvaram* trio have largely been taken from medieval Tamiḻ literature. The acts of these hymnists as elaborated in the Tiruttoṇḍarpurāṇam of Sēkkiḻār, a 12th century writer, have been looked upon as the main fountainhead of basic data. It may be remarked that the materials from this work have also been used for a variety of purposes such as reconstructing the social and cultural history of the medieval period of the Tamiḻ Nāḍu, (Rājamānikkam 1958) for the understanding of the nature of Śaivism that was current during that period (Nārāyana Aiyer, 1936), and also to determine the identity and age of certain kings and persons who appear in the old ruling dynasties of the Tamiḻ Nāḍu (Mahalingam, 1969). The general belief that the Periapurāṇam is a dependable historical account is best expressed in the words of Pillai (1969);

> "Some facts of political history are also recorded incidentally".

It should be noted that according to another noted historian, this text is "not so valuable" as a source material (Nilakanta Sastri, 1956); elswhere (1955) the same author has observed: "It seems only proper, therefore, that we accept the beautiful pen-pictures which abound in Sēkkiḻār's great work as idealised accounts of life and society as he saw then in his own day, rather than as studies and portraits of a bygone age." It is well to remember that Sēkkiḻār's sole purpose in composing this work was to inculcate *bhakti* (devotion) in the minds of listeners and readers as exampled in the *acta sanctorum* of the 63 saints of

the Śaivite hagiology. With such a pre-occupation, it is natural to expect that the "historical" incidents handled therein lose much of their character and value due to interpolations, superimpositions and anachronisms. So much so the eventual task of sifting the genuine historical strings from the compounded matrix is rendered hopeless. Even should a string be isolated, it must be emphasized that it is not completely free from shadows of doubts and vagaries.

It is pertinent to mention in this connection that there are many literary works in the Kannaḍa language dealing with the lives of the 63 Śaivite saints.* The earliest of these is Śivagaṇada ragalē, (*Ragalē* composition on the Śivagaṇa) written by Harihara who lived about the 12th century AD, thus more or less a contemporary of Sēkkiḷār. There is also another book, recently come to light, of the same author in prose—Aravattumūvaru puratānara kathā garbhada gadya (Summary in prose of the story of the sixty three Śaiva devotees). Thus the compositions of Sēkkiḷār and of Harihara stand favourably comparable both in reference to the contemporaneity of the authors and to the content of their texts. Although both the authors have dealt with the lives of the Śaivaite devotees in the same sequence (Harihara or his follows in Kannaḍa

*Some of these are:

AD 1200	Harihara	Śivagaṇada ragalē, also known as Purātanara ragale.
		Aravattu mūvaru purātanara kathāgarbhada gadya.
AD 1400	Bhīma kavi	Basava purāna.
AD 1425	Lakkaṇa dandēśa	Śivatattva cintāmaṇi.
AD 1470	Tōnṭada Śiddaliṅga Śivayōgi	Pālkurike sōmanātha purāna.
	Panditārādhya	Gaṇasahasra nāmāvali.
	Pālkurike Sōmanātha	Ganasahasra nāmāvali.
AD 1500	Nijaguṇa Śivayōgi	Aravattumūvara tripadi.
AD 1500	Suraṅga	Triśaṣthi purātana caritra.

omitted the 'Tillaivāḷaṇḍaṇarpurāṇam') and, although they narrate the same incidents in the stories of the corresponding sets of devotees, there are significant differences in the narratives of the two languages which are of considerable factual importance. We may now briefly examine some of those stories that are presumed to have a bearing on determining the age of the *tēvāram* trio.

Tirujñānasambandar :

According to the Periapurāṇam, the child Āludaiyappiḷḷaiyār cried when his father was bathing in a tank and Umā is said to have given her breast-milk to him. Harihara does not mention this incident and merely says that the child won over the Māya and drank the breast-milk. Suraṅga, in his Triśaṣthipurātanacaritram, interpolates Nārada into the story and also asserts that Skanda was born as Tirujñānasambandar.

Tirunāvukarasar :

Although the Kannaḍa works give a somewhat uniform version of the story and refer to the troubles that the saint encountered with the Jainas, there is no mention of the latter throwing him into water after he was bound to a stone.

Sundarar :

Sundarar's marriage with two wives does not find mention in the works of Harihara or of other Kannaḍa poets.

Cēramān Perumāḷ :

Harihara as well as Lakkana dandēśa mention that this king gave over his kingdom to Tirunīlakaṇṭapāṇa, which incident is not seen in the Periapurāṇam.

Śiruttoṇḍar :

The Kannaḍa versions do not mention that this saint was an army officer under the Pallavas; they also do not refer to the Vātāpi war. While in the Periapurāṇam Śiruttoṇḍar was visited by Śiva in the guise of a Bhairava, the Kannaḍa versions state that Śiva came as Himself.

Kōççengatçōḻan:

The Kannaḍa versions locate the place of this devotee (in his previous birth) on the banks of the river Gōdāvari, while according to the Tamiḻ narratives it was a place called Candratīrtha in the Çola country. The trend of the story in the Kannaḍa versions is wholly different from that in the Periapurāṇam. The former say that the elephant which was killed by Kōççengatçōḻan was born as a demon dwelling in a cave; that there was an encounter between this being and the king, whereupon the latter realized that he had neglected the worship of Śivaliṅga. The moment he began worshipping Śiva, he was redeemed.

Narasiṅgamunaiyariar:

According to the Periapurāṇam, the locus of this devotee was Tirumunaippāḍi while the Kannaḍa versions place him at Tiru*nāvalpura*; *Harihara makes him a resident of Śivapura* (Agravāḍi?). Some narratives like the Triśaṣthipurātana caritam make this devotee the father of Sundarar.

Variations such as these around a central theme are illustrative of the imaginative wings that it acquires in the hands of individual poets, Sekkiḻar not excluded. What degree of reliance is to be placed on such narratives as source materials for scientific historical research is to be critically evaluated. The so-called internal evidence becomes genuine only after the legendary and the hyperbolic are eliminated from the events; and it is here that utmost caution and restraint are needed. In works of the type of Periapurāṇam and the similar Kannaḍa narratives with a significant degree of quantitative and qualitative variables, the question arises as to which of these events or episodes are free from imaginative halo and therefore worthy of choice as valid source materials.

In discussions on the age of the *tēvāram* trio, another set of sources is taken from the *tēvāram* itself. In the course of their devotional outpourings, the trio casually refer to some royal persons and important individuals who were connected with them or with incidents connected with them. Such individuals are asserted to

have been the contemporaries of the *tēvāram* writers. In other words, no allowance is made to the possibility of placing such incidentally mentioned persons, at an earlier period than the trio. The use of the present tense in connection with these persons has been argued in favour of their having been coeval with the *tēvāram* writers themselves. It should not forgotten however, that the tense in poetry is a factor that enjoys poetic licence, and therefore, is not unambiguously reliable for chronological purposes.

Occasionally data from the epigraphic records have been taken as another source in discussions bearing on the age of the *tēvāram* trio. It should be borne in mind that while the value of dated epigraphs as unquestionable testimony is universally recognized, those whose dates are inferred solely from the nature of the script greatly reduces their value for historical purposes.

It is now necessary to critically examine the sources and inferences drawn therefrom to arrive at the accepted dates of the *tēvāram* trio.

1. Tirunavukkaraśar and Mahēndravarman I

(a) *Literature*:

The Periapurāṇam narrates that Tirunāvukkarasar was once tied to a block of stone and thrown into the sea by the Jainas whereupon he muttered the Five Sacred letters (*Pañcākṣara*) ; the stone was transformed into a float that brought the saint safely to the shore nearby. A Pallava king, who heard this miracle, adored Tirunāvukkarasar and got himself converted to Śaivism. It is also said that this king caused the demolition of a Jaina monastery at Pātalīputra and with the materials built a temple called Guṇabhara-Īśvaram elsewhere.

It should be specially noted here that Sekkiḻar neither mentions the name of the Pallava king nor gives any clue that helps to identify who the king was.

(b) *Epigraphy*:

On the two flanks of the Gangādhara sculpture in the "upper rock-cut cave temple" (Lalitāṅkura Pallavēśvara-gṛha) in Tiruchi

are inscribed some verses in Samskṛt; (SII. I. Nos. 33, 34). It is said that the script of the inscriptions "remind us of those of the Pallava inscriptions at Māmallapuram and Kāñchipuram." The inscriptions refer to a king by name Guṇabhara—with the epithets Puruṣōttama, Śatrumalla and Satyasamdha—who caused the building of a Śiva temple in which was placed a *liṅga.* With great caution, the editor of these inscriptions (Hultzsch) remarked that it is "very probable that Guṇabhara was a Pallava prince, who ruled over the Chola country."

Hultzsch also drew attention to the *double entendre* of a verse in the inscription No. 33 running as follows:

> Gunabhara-nāmāni rāja-
> nyanēna liṅgēna liṅginī jñānam
> pṛthatam cirāya lōkē
> vipakṣavṛttēh parāvṛttam

This is a verse that has been discussed and has formed the sheet-anchor for several far-reaching conclusions (Srīnivasan, 1964; Mahalingam, 1969; Nagaswamy, 1971). Hultzsch rendered the stanza as follows: "While the king called Guṇabhara is a worshipper of the *liṅga,* let the knowledge, which has turned back from hostile (*vipakṣa*) conduct, be spread for a long time in the world by this liṅga!" He also noted in a foot-note that "This whole verse has a *double entendre.* It contains allusions to the Indian logic (*tarkaśāstra*), in which *liṅgin* means the subject of a proposition, *liṅga* the predicate of a proposition and *vipakṣa* an instance on the opposite side." Mahalingam (1969) has accepted both these contexts as bearing relevance to the religious background of Mahēndravarman I and according to him, "This, when supplemented with the tradition embodied in the *Periapurāṇam,* may hint at his probable conversion." Nagaswamy (1971) also has accepted the general tone of Hultzsch's rendering, but gives a new version which appears to be a decided improvement on Hultzsch's; he also offers an elaborated commentary on the second meaning, that is, the context of the *tarka.* He sees in this verse " a clear reference to Mahēndra's conversion from Jainism to Śaivism in the words *vipakṣavṛttēh parāvṛttam.* There is also an unequivocal

reference to the worship of Śivaliṅga in the terms *Liṅga* and *Liṅgin*, Liṅgin meaning one who bears the *liṅga*, i.e. worships Liṅga."

To what extent these categorical conclusions are warranted needs critical assessment. Granting for a moment that the verse under consideration contains two meanings, one is tempted to question the relevance of *tarka* to the context and content of the epigraph. Shorn of the much disputed *double entendre*, a paraphrase of the verse simply means: "The King named Guṇabhara is a worshipper of *Linga.* The knowledge—which was in a state of hostility but has now been turned away—be spread with the establishment of this *linga.*"

Srīnivasan draws attention to an important point bearing on the religion of Mahēndra. The cave temple at Maṇḍagapaṭṭu, the first of his excavations, is dedicated to Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva; the one at Tiruchi, a later excavation, is dedicated to Śiva alone. Therefore, the temple building activities of the king do not suggest that he was a follower of Jainism. "The king, who is said to have returned from the path of 'hostile conduct' to Śaivism, would not have dedicated his early excavations to Trimurti, or subsequently to Viṣṇu, as he did at Mahēndravāḍi."

Srinivāsan further observes: "Perhaps it would be more correct to assume that he was a tolerant follower of Vaidikamārga (Brahmanical religion) and under the influence of the contemporary events and in the trend of the prevailing religious revival he became an ardent Śaiva in the latter part of his life, when all his three cave-temples Tiruchirapalli, Dalavanur and Siyamaṅgalam were dedicated to Śiva in preference to other gods."

If as suggested above *Vipaksavritti* is taken to mean "a conduct which deviates from the noun" in the context of *rāja-dharma* there would be no room to interpolate guesses with reference to the personal religion of Guṇabhadra.

(c) *Historical factors*:

According to tradition, Tirunāvukkarasar visited and sang about the presiding deities of the Śiva temples in the area north of the

river Ponniyār in the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam—Ālangāḍu, Pāchchur, Kālahasti, Tiruvoṟṟiyūr, Tiruvānmiyūr, Tirukkaḻukunṟam and Kāñchipuram. Many of the Śiva temples built by Mahēndravarman I are scattered in the same area. Granting that Tirunāvukkarasar roamed about in this area devoutly visiting the Śiva temples, it is strange indeed that he never visited any of those created by his contemporary, Mahēndra I. This strange attitude causes greater bewilderment when it is realised that, according to another tradition, Tirunāvukkarasar was instrumental in converting Mahēndra from Jainism to Śaivism and that Mahēndra began to build the temples dedicated to Śiva only subsequent to his conversion.

Another important query also poses itself in this connection. Again, if it is accepted that Tirunāvukkarasar sang about the Śiva temples mentioned above and that he was a contemporary of Mahēndra I, who were the donors or builders of these temples? They could not have been the pre-Mahendra rulers of the Pallava dynasty because nothing is known of their temple-building activities. Nor can they be ascribed to Mahēndra himself because they fail to exhibit any of the Pallava traits (excepting the one at Tirukkaḻukkunṟam). Nor could they have been built by the Çolas as they were unknown as a dynasty in the 6th/7th centuries; if it is contended that they could have been the Çolas of the so-called Caṅkam Age (1st to the 3rd centuries A.D.), firstly their territory did not extend as far north as the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam, and secondly, there does not appear to be any references to the existence of temples dedicated to Śiva during that age.

The Tirukkaḻukunṟam temples (Orukāl Maṇḍapa and Vēdagirīśvara temple) belong to the post-Mahēndra period; another temple of aspidal shape within the *prakāra* of the Bhaktavatsala temple at the foot of the hill is suspected to be of the time of the Pallava Skandasiṣya (Bālasubramanyam, 1968). Tirunāvukkarasar's *Tiruttāṇḍakam* on Tirukkaḻukunṟam, it should be emphasized, does not refer to any one of these temples in particular.

2. Tirunāvukkarasar ond Tirujñānasambandar:

As early as 1895, Sundaram Pillay made extensive use of Sēkkiḻārpurāṇam (Tirumuraikkaṇḍapurāṇam) and also Periapurāṇam to deduce the age of Tirujñānasambandar. The conversion of one Kūn Pāndyan from Jainism to Śaivism is taken as "the most important historical fact connected with Sambanda's life." Sundaram Pillay then refutes the estimates of Caldwell (1875) and of Nelson (1868)—who placed Tirujñānasambandar respectively in the 13th (AD 1292) and 14th (AD 1320) centuries—on the ground that their view "betrays such an absence of the sense of historical perspective as cannot but produce the most amusing and grotesque results."

Sundaram Pillay takes the date of Umāpati Śivāçarya as the starting point for his thesis. He takes us through history in the retrospect until the time of Kaṇḍarāditya. He contends that Tañjāvūr was in existence in the days of Tirujñānasambandar and that his *tēvarams* do not allude to Parāntaka I; he also draws attention to the absence of this king's benefaction of gilding the roof of the Chidambaram temple in epigraphy. He further remarks that the Parāntaka I's line is a distant off shoot from that of Kōççeṅgaṇan, "probably an offshoot of an alliance of the Old Choḻa family with the Pallavas of Kāñchi." Then he contemplates that a "long period of confusion would seem to have prevailed between the demise of Koççeṅgaṇan and the new Choḻa dynasty to which Parāntaka and Kandarāditya belonged." Thus, the time of Koççengaṇan is fixed as the lower and that of Kandarāditya the upper limits for the age of Tirujñānasambandar. In order to circumscribe the latter's age within a still more restricted gamut, he refers to the occurrence of the word 'dravida siśu' in Śamkarāçarya's *Soundaryalahari* and identifies this name as that of Āludaiyappiḷḷai, an alternative name of Tirujñānasambandar. He takes the date of Ādi Śamkarācarya in the 7th century AD and contends that "Sambanda was a well known character" in the days of Śamkarācarya.

It is important to realize in this connection that Sundaram Pillay wrote his thesis nearly 80 years ago and that much water

has flowed during this period both in regard to history and epigraphy, so much so, a rethinking on several older concepts and conclusions is strongly warranted. His thesis needs the following emendations:

(i) Sundaram Pillay "borrowed valuable facts" from Sēkkiḷārpurāṇam and Tirumuṟaikkaṇḍa purāṇam, both of which had been presumed for a long time to be the works written by Umāpati Sivāçārya of the 14th century AD. Now-a-days serious doubts are being expressed as to the authorship of these compositions and the general opinion that it is not to be attributed to Umāpati is gaining ground (Sadasiva Pandarattar, 1963). It is quite possible that these works belong to the 16th/17th centuries.

(ii) The identification of Kūn Pāṇḍyan is a matter that has not been satisfactorily settled. It is suspected that the Pāndyan ruler with this name could be Māravarman Arikēsari, AD 640–670 (Subramanian, 1955). This identification is made purely on subjective and artificial grounds. There are no historical or epigraphical evidence to support the equation. The Vēlvikuḍi copper-plate grant and the comments in Iraiyanār's Akapporuḷ (stanzas 22, 106, 235. 309) glorify Māravarman Arikēsari's victories; the latter work upholds his devotion to Śiva (stanzas 256, 279). The Velvikuḍi grant further records his having performed *hiraṇyagarbha* and *tulābhāra* benefactions, worthy of a kṣatriya. Thus the available evidence does not suggest that he was a follower of Jainism. Now the question arises whether such a person would be referred to by a sacrilegious epithet 'kūn' (hunchback) in spite of the probability that he could have had such a structural deformity. On considerations as these, not only is the identity of Kūn Pāndyan with Māravarman Arikēsari repelled away, poles apart, but the fictitious nature of the character, also confirmed.

(iii) Tirujñānasambandar's *tēvarams* do not mention the name of Parāntaka I. Should we expect devotional literature to cite the names of all kings? Sundaram Pillay notes the absence of authentic evidence for Parāntaka I's gilding the Chidambaram temple in epigraphy. The subsequently discovered Tiruvālaṅgāḍu

and Leiden copper-plates clearly refer to the fact of the gilding benefaction to the Tillai shrine by this king.

(iv) Sundaram Pillay suspects that Parāntaka I's lineage represents an offshoot arising out of a matrimonial alliance between the 'Old Choḷa' and Pallava dynasties. The history of the Coḷas from the pre-Vijayālaya times to the regnal years of Rājarāja I is yet imperfectly known. Our present knowledge of the Pallava-Coḷa political relationships is also next to nothing. The available epigraphs, however, fail to confirm Sundaram Pillay's guess. On the contrary, there appears to be a hint suggestive of the Rāshtrakuta blood in one of the sons of Āditya I (Sadasiva Pandarattar, 1967). Yet nothing is known about the mother of Parāntaka I.

(v) Sundaram Pillay fixes the lower limit of the age of Tirujñānasambandar in the period of one Koççeṅgaṇan, who has been presumed to be a remote ancestor of the later Coḷas. Who was this Koççeṅgaṇan?

According to Nilakanta Sastri (1955), "The life of Koççeṅgaṇan, like that of Karikāla, came to gather a haze of legend round himself"; the author has rightly warned us: "it is necessary to avoid mixing up facts drawn from contemporary sources with beliefs of later times." References to this king occur in the anthology Puṛanāṉuṛu (74) and in the poem Kalavali of Poykaiyār, which are believed to have been composed during the Caṅkam age. He is also referred to in the *tēvarams* of Tirujñānasambandar, of Sundarar and also in the *Prabandams* of Tirumaṅgai Ālvār. The earliest epigraphs to mention his name (his sequential placement in genealogy being subjected to variability) appear in the "legendary geneaology of the Coḷa copper-plates of the 10th and 11th centuries" (SII. II, pp. 152–3; 253; 377–9). Thus it appears that the legends concerning the person were first woven into literary works and later worked their way into the copper-plates. It should be noted that none of the stone inscriptions—even those that were incised earlier than the copper-plates—refer to Koççeṅgaṇan directly or indirectly.

The Koççeṅgaṇan problem is one of the tough stumbling blocks in Cōḷa history. Resolving this problem needs much radical re-thinking about the presumed age of Puṛanānuṛu (and of the Caṅkam literature). Then only would it be possible to assess his identity and period,—whether he should be considered as a remote ancestor of the Cōḷas or as one of the those of the medieval Cōḷas whom we know. Until this is done, he remains a problematically fictitious figure.

(vi) Sundaram Pillay takes the date of Ādi Śaṁkarāçārya as the 7th century. Although this controversy is not finally settled, the current majority opinion tends to place him in the late 8th or in the early 9th centuries. However. serious doubts have been expressed as to the authorship of *Soundaryalahari*—whether it was composed by Ādi Śaṁkara or by a later preceptor bearing the pontifical name Śaṁkarāçārya. Here again, the modern opinion is in favour of excluding this work from the authentic works of Ādi Saṁkara (Baladev Upadhyaya, 1950) (Saccidanan-dendra Sarasvati, 1963).

Thus the sources which were presumed to have had historical validity by Sundaram Pillay nearly 80 years ago lose their presumed significance today. Either they are legendary or change their complexion and context or become modified. Without realizing these new trends and changed situation no useful purpose is served by dogmatically insisting that Tirujñānasambandar lived in the 7th century AD.

The only evidence for the presumed contemporaneity of Tirujñānasambandar and Tirunāvukkarasar is the statement of Sekkiḷār in his Periapurāṇam. This source states that Tirunāvukkarasar, having heard of the miraculous events that took place in the childhood of Tirujñānasambandar, came over to Sirkāḷi. At this time the latter was about seven years old, having just had his sacred thread-investiture completed while the former had reached his old age. In the absence of any other corroborative evidences it appears wholly unwise to give historical credence to Sēkkiḷār's imaginative story.

3. Narasimhavarman II and Sundarar:

Quite a number of scholars from the commencement of the present century have discussed the date of Sundarar. More recently, Dorai Rangaswamy (1958) and Vellaivaranan (1962) have dealt with the problem in an exhaustive manner and have offered their conclusions. However, the date of Sundarar is yet an open question warranting further research and re-thinking. A broad survey of literature shows that the largest part of source materials have been taken from the writings of Sundarar himself with a rather pronounced sentimental bias. The dates arrived at may be sampled out as follows:

(i) Sundarar, a contemporary of Narasimhavarman II Rājasimha (AD 690/1–728/9).
   Mahalingam (1969)
   Vellaivaranan (1962)
   Sadasiva Pandarattar (1937)

(ii) Sundarar, a contemporary of Nandivarman II Pallavamalla (AD 731–796).
   Narayana Aiyer (1936)

(iii) Sundarar, a contemporary of Dantivarman (AD 796–846)
   Srinivasa Pillai (1949)

(iv) Sundarar, a contemporary of Nandivarman III (AD 846–869)
   Minakshi (1938)
   Rajamanikkam (1960)

Dorai Rangaswāmy (1958) and Vellaivaranan (1962) have taken great pains to refute the opinions of all those authors who place Sundarar later than the period of Rājasimha. While so doing and in propounding their own views, a major part of their arguments are involved in undercurrents and overtones of sentiment and emotion, which have no place in scientific scrutiny.

Vellaivaranan draws special attention to the use of the present tense in the reference to Kāḍavarkōn by Sundarar—*Kadalsūḻnda*

ulakelām kākkinṟa perumān kāḍavarkōn kaḻarççiṅkan (the Kāḍava King who rules over the entire earth surrounded by the sea). The epithet 'kaḍalsūḻnda ulakelām' (the entire earth surrounded by the sea) is admittedly a poetic exaggeration as no Pallava king ever ruled the entire peninsular India, which is the area surrounded by the sea. The use of the present tense in the phrase is obviously guided by the dictates of the prosodic metre and to stress that it refers to a contemporary historical event is wholly unwarranted.

Elaborate and extended scope is sought for the phrase *kadal-sūḻnda ulakelām* by Dorai Rangaswamy (1958). While it may be a fact that Rājasimha's diplomatic relationships were established across the waters of the Bay of Beṅgal in China and Sri Laṅka and possibly in some areas of the Far East, and while it is equally probable that he possessed a strong naval arm, it is doubtful if he ever became the ruler of these areas. Is this not an instance of highly artificial and deliberate stretching of a somewhat little-known and slender evidence in order to justify a pre-conceived conclusion? Victories and valourous deeds of kings generally assume exaggerated proportions in poetry. In fact, traditionally. exaggeration (*utprēkṣa*) is considered to be one of the necessary qualities of poetry. Sundarar's phrase itself has accommodated this quality in considerable measure. There is no justification to expand its scope still further in reference to Kaḻaṟççiṅkan.

Rather funny logic is evoked in identifying this Kaḻaṟççiṅkan with Rājasimha. 'Çiṅkan' is taken to be the real name of the king and 'Kaḻar' is taken to refer to his valour. Analogies are cited as Rājasimha, Ksatriyasimha and Narasimha, which are all epithets borne by Narasimhavarman II and the conclusion is reached that 'kaḻaṟ' represents a combination of the first half of the analgoues, - Raja, Ksatriya and Nara (Vellaivaranan, 1962)! Dorai Rangaswamy (so also Mahalingam, 1969) takes the word '*kaḻar*' as meaning 'heroic anklet' which is used as an epithet to a warrior of repute. Yet, out of several scores of *birudas* of Rājasimha, inspite of the fact that a good number of them refer to his prowess, it is strange that none approximates the sense involved in 'kaḻarççiṅkan' (Lion wearing the heroic anklet).

It should be noted that both Sundarar and Sēkkiḻār use the word '*kāḍava*' as a qualifying epithet for Kaḻaṛçciṅkan and this word, along with its variant *kāḍuveṭṭi*, has been invariably taken to mean the Pallava dynasty. The Kannaḍa epigraphs of the 7th-9th centuries (and of later periods as well) appear to clearly distinguish the Pallava and the Kāḍava (Kāḍuveṭṭi) as two separate clans (eg. EC VI. Siragunda); an impression is gained that the kāḍuveṭṭi clan perhaps represents a collateral or a subordinate branch of the Pallavas. The names of some of these chieftains also end in *ciṅkan.* The history of the Kāḍavas/Kāḍuveṭṭis is yet to be written. Under these circumstances would it not be premature and hazardous to look for this Kaḻaṛçciṅkan within the limits of the Pallava lineage?

One more aspect of the Sundarar problem needs comment. A close connection is contemplated between the erection of the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchipuram by Rājasimha and the story of the saint Pūsalār (Sadasiva Pandarattar, 1957 Vellaivaranan, 1962). As rightly observed by Mahalingam (1969), "There is no dearth of valid criticism and objection to this identification. It is true that Rājasimha was a *Kāḍavarkōn* and built a stone temple at Kāñchipuram, the two things that tally with the description (of Pūsalār's life) in the *Periapurāṇam.* But while the inscription in the Kailāsanātha temple speaks of a heavenly voice heard by Rājasimha, Sekkiḻār only refers to Śiva's appearance in a dream. Again Nambi Andār Nambi who lived prior to Sēkkiḻār refers only to the imaginary temple constructed by Pūsalār without any mention of the Pallava ruler of Kāñchi and his stone temple."

CRITIQUE 1

The end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries in Tamiḻ Nāḍu witnessed a lively onset of literary and historical activities. During this period we see the discovery and printing of classical literary works, the development of new imaginative wings to the muse of poetry, the proliferation of the Tamiḻ language to reach the common man through journalism, and the adoption of new literary forms like the short story, novel and drama. Independently of these activities was also initiated the

study of ancient monuments and decipherment of epigraphic records. In a way, one of the guidelines for the workers in the fields of archaeology and epigraphy was provided by the devotional works of the Śaiva *nāyanmārs* and Vaishnavite *aḻvārs*. The institution of centres of higher learning in liberal arts by the Governmental agency provided a meeting place for literature, culture, history and other disciplines. It is in this totality of environment that early attempts were made at reconstructing the history of Tamiḻ Nāḍu. It should not be forgotten that practically very little was then known of the dynasties that ruled the different parts of South India. The few hundreds of epigraphs that had been discovered had not been collated on account of discontinuity and the sampling itself was yet inadequate. The only sources that were available at the time were some works of literature—religious and secular. It is but natural that Sundaram Pillay's studies (as also of other students of history, like T. A, Gopinatha Rao, Venkayya, Hultzsh, *et al*) were circumscribed by the limited nature of source materials. Thus their opinions and conclusions of 70–80 years ago represent only one side of the coin in the modern context.

The historical and epigraphical data that have accumulated over half a century and more, supply several points that aptly deserve to be juxtaposed with the old findings in order to understand the other side of the coin. Such a study is also necessary in order to bring home the correctness or otherwise of our beliefs, opinions and concepts.

The so-called 'internal evidence' gleaned from an intensive study of a literary source, certainly has value in historical studies. But the question arises: Can one expect to gather truly historical data from all types of literature? Every student of history is aware of the dearth of authentic writings in old literature of several languages. Apart from those narratives that directly deal with the life of a king or noble or place or event—where too, quite a wide degree of allowance is to be made in order to eliminate exaggerations—the devotional or sectarian books in general may not be expected to contain valid source materials for history; even if they do, it is a purely subjective assessment that has been

the guiding factor for isolating the 'historical' strands from the skeins. In this process, legendary events are confused as representing history and, mythical persons are attempted to be identified with those who actually lived in flesh and blood. It also happens that, already catapulted accounts in such literature are shot up to still greater heights and the meaning of certain words or events stretched up to or even beyond the snapping point. In view of these dangers it is obligatory to reserve a consideration of the 'internal evidences' until the 'external evidences' gleaned from epigraphy, architecture and allied disciplines of study are blocked out and their value and pattern assessed.

It is no over-statement that epigraphic records generally afford a much more reliable data than literature. Because of this advantage, this data, wherever possible, should be used to build the chronological framework with which the literary sources may be meaningfully compared. It is now clear from recent studies (Swamy, 1972[a]), for example, that the institution of offering the *tiruppadiyams* in temples was initiated for the first time in the reign of Parāntaka I (139 of 1935, AD 910; 99 of 1928/9, AD 942; 111 of 1925, AD 943) and that the installation of the icons of the *tēvāram* trio in temples and offering worship to them commenced in the time of Rājarāja I (299 of 1917, AD 995; 68 of 1927/8, AD 1006; 37 of 1920. AD 1032). Vellaivaranan (1952) prefers to push back the commencement of *tiruppadiyam* offering to the time of Āditya I on the basis of two *Rājakēsari* inscriptions, but the identification of this title with Āditya I remains doubtful. Both these epigraphs are in the Tiruchi district. One of them is dated in the 3rd regnal year, while the other in th 6th. It is likely that both are referable to the period of Gaṇḍarāditya. Thus authentic references to the *tēvāram* trio and to their compositions commence appearing only in the earlier part of the Cola period, that is, the 10th century AD (Swamy, 1972[a]).

In the foregoing pages attention has been drawn to the untrustworthy and often ambiguous nature of the source materials that have been projected to place the *tēvāram* trio in the early Pallava period of the Simhaviṣṇu line, that is in the 7th century

AD. The question naturally arises as to what had happened to the writings of these saints for the period between the 7th to the 10th centuries. Of course, sentiment-saturated stories and legends are readily brought forward to tell us that they had been *lost* and later *re-discovered*!

Here we are faced with a curious anachronism. The re-discovery is generally attributed to Rājarāja I, AD 985–1014 (Nilakanta Sastri, 1955[a]), although the Annāmalai University school as already stated, argues that the credit should go to Āditya I, AD 871–907 (Vellaivaranan, 1962). The place where the *tēvārams* are supposed to have been re-discovered with the help of Nambi-Āndār Nambi by one of the above kings is now shown in the second *prakāra* of the Naṭarāja temple, Chidambaram. It is to be noted that there is unquestionable epigraphic evidence to show that the two inner *prakāras* of this temple came into existence in the time of Kulōttuṅga I (AD 1070–1120) and his son/successor Vikrama (AD 1118–1135). This is just one of the instances to illustrate the variance of data obtained through literature (in this case, the Tirumuṛaikkaṇḍa purāṇam) and through epigraphy. To presume the earlier existence of these *prakārās* and the concerned room in the time of Āditya I, that someone had demolished them or they had become destroyed of their own accord and that Kulottuṅga I and his son re-built the structures, is a theme for a *puṛāna* but not for history.

The writers of the history of Tamiḻ literature emphatically tell us that the Golden age of the Caṅkam during the first three centuries of the Christian era was disrupted by the usurpation of the land and its domination by an ubiquitous but unknown clan called the Kaḷabhras, who were opposed to Tamiḻ language and culture, and introduced Pali and Prakṛt languages. This situation, it is asserted, prevailed for the next three or four centuries. The Pallavas who followed this clan in the 7th century AD are charged with bias for Prakṛt and Samskṛt, and positive neglect of Tamiḻ (Sadasiva Pandarattar, 1957). Yet in the same breath we are asked to believe that the *tēvāram* trio exerted a great impact on the Pallava rulers of the 7th century and wrote thousands and

thousands of *tiruppadiyams* in the Tamiḻ language (Vellaivaranan, 1962). Are there sufficient evidences to warrant such sweeping assertions? What happened till the end of the 6th century AD does not concern us here. We are dealing with the situation and environment of the 7th century which is presumed to have been the productive period of the *tēvārams*. A new look at the old data in the light of what has accumulated during subsequent periods, however, appear to speak of a sequence and situation that are in every way different from the presently assumed quibbling version. Now let us critically examine the involved factors.

II. REVIEW OF "EXTERNAL" EVIDENCE

4. Pallava and Çoḻa territories in the 7th century A.D.

The Samskṛt portion of the Paḷḷankōvil copper-plate grant executed in the 6th year of Kō-Vijaya Simhavarman (that, is, the Pallava king Simhavarman) states that his son Simhaviṣṇu "conquered the land of the Çoḻas, which had as its garland the daughter of kavera, as its waist-band the rice fields, the rich fields, of sugarcane, the groves of palm trees, plantains and the like (verse 5, TASSI, 1959, p. 81). The Tamiḻ part of the same inscription, however, does not allude to this information. Simhaviṣṇu's victory over the Çoḻa country finds a passing mention in the Kasakuḍi plates issued in the 22nd regnal year (AD 753) of Nandivarman II Pallavamallā; the Vēlur-pāḷayam plates (SII. II. No. 73) incised in the 6th regnal year of Vijaya Nandivarman (Nandivarman III), AD 852, the same victory is referred to: "He (Simhaviṣṇu) quickly seized the country of the Çoḻas embellished by the daughter of Kavira whose ornaments are the forests of paddy (fields) and where (one found) brilliant groves of areca (palms)." (SII. II. No. 98). It may be noted that the descriptions of the land in this copper-plate is almost a copy of that in the Paḷḷankōvil plates, a situation which raises the suspicion that the (composer of the Vēlurpāḷayam grant could have taken the information almost *in toto* from the Paḷḷankōvil plates. It should also be noted that the information contained in the three copper-plates cannot be taken as independent evidences, but only as a repetition of a single source, that is, from the Paḷḷankōvil grant,

The Vēlurpālayam plates refer also to Buddhavarman as "The submarine fire to the ocean of the Coḷa army". This Pallava king is believed to have lived some time in the 4th or 5th century AD. In view of the ambiguous identity of this ruler, nothing more is known of him.

The inscription of the rock-cut cave temple at Tiruchi (SII. I. Nos. 33, 34) tell us that the hill at the place "resembles the diadem of the Coḷa province" and that in response to a question, "How could I, standing in a temple on earth, view the great power of the Coḷas or the beauty of the river Kavira?", "the king Guṇabhara...assigned to him this mountain temple..."

Hultzsch, who first edited these inscriptions, did not identify who the king was, and merely stated that "the characters of the two pillar inscriptions remind us of those of the Pallava inscriptions at Māmallapuram and Kāñchipuram" and this feature "makes it very probable that Guṇabhara was a Pallava prince, who ruled over the Coḷa country." Venkayya (EI. III. No. 38[a]) suggested the possible identity of this Guṇabhara with Mahēndravarman I, the reasons being:—

(i) Of the *birudas* Guṇabhara (which is unlikely to be the personal name of the king), Satyasamdha, Satrumalla and Puruṣottama mentioned in the Tiruchi inscriptions, the name Guṇabhara and Satrumalla occur in the Vallam inscription (SII. II. No. 72).

(ii) According to the Periapurāṇam, Tirujñānasambandar visited Siruttonḍa-nāyanār and therefore both these persons were contemporaries; the former was also the younger contemporary of Tirunāvukkarasar "who was first persecuted and then patronised by an un-named Pallava king. One of the names of this king "appears to have been Guṇadhara."

(iii) "As the difference between the names Guṇadhara and Guṇabhara is very slight, Mahēndra potaraja alias Guṇabhara of the Vallam inscription may be identified with Guṇadhara, who, according to the Periapurāṇam, first persecuted and then patronised Tirunāvukkarasar. ....it is clear that the Mahēndra potaraja

alias Guṇabhara of the Vallam inscription, whom I propose to identify with the Guṇadhara of the Periapurāṇam, could only be Mahēndravarman I."

In spite of this identity and the consequent acceptance Mahēndravarman I was the author of the Tiruchi rock-cut cave inscriptions, there are certain factors that are not reconcilable. Knowing fully well the undependability of Periyapurāṇam as a source book of history, is there justification to draw so heavily from that narrative? It should be noted that but for Sekkiḻār's account, Venkayya's inference would rest on very weak grounds. Because, the similarity of the *birudas*, in itself, as Hultzsch writes, is "a somewhat unsafe basis for identification."

Recently Subramaniam (1957) has drawn attention to the two varieties of scripts that were employed by the Pallavas of the 7th century AD: (i) "more or less Telugu-Kannaḍa in origin", and (ii) Grantha developed in the Tamiḻ country. The former has been employed in the Tiruchi inscriptions while the latter is found in Kūram, which, according to Subramaniam, "are much more developed." The inference reached by Subramaniam is that the use of certain Telugu-Kannaḍa letters in the Tiruchirappaḷḷi inscriptions of Mahēndravarman I "is peculiar and can be explained only by taking that the script in his records is Telugu-Kannaḍa and not the Grantha of the Tamiḻ country as seen in the Kūram grant." Furthermore, the Vallam inscription also belongs to the Telugu-Kannaḍa type. For the presence of the Telugu-Kannaḍa script in the Tamiḻ country at that early period, as distinct and in addition to the Grantha script, Subramaniam postulates that Mahēndra could have introduced the Telugu-Kannaḍa characters because of his "Telugu influence" as may be seen in some of his *birudas.*

This explanation is certainly one of the probabilities. There is also another which appears to be equally plausible. Firstly, it should be readily admitted that our present knowledge of the Pallavas of the Simhaviṣṇu line is based largely on later inscriptions; there is much to be known about the pre-Simhaviṣṇu genealogy. The recent discovery of new epigraphs by the Archaeology Department of Tamiḻ Nāḍu (Ganesan, 1971) appears to have a bearing

on the 6th/7th century history of the Pallavas. At least until this material is subjected to critical studies and until coherent working hypotheses are put forward, does it not appear justifiable to suggest that the probability of the Tiruchi (and perhaps the Vallam) inscriptions as referring to the benefactions of some other king or chieftain belonging to the Pallava alliance?

The determination of the boundaries of the Cōḷa country on the 7th century AD which appears to have been taken by the Pallavas poses a major problem, not to speak of its limits during earlier periods. In addition to the reference to this country mentioned in the 7th century Pallava inscriptions, some of the Chālukya record of the same period attest to the existence of a district territory called Ċolikavisaya (FI. X. No. 22, Gadwal plates). Pulakēsin II's conquest of the Pallavas is said to have brought prosperity to the Coḷa along with Kēraḷa and Pāṇḍya (EI. VI. No. 1, Aihole inscription). Yuan Chwang, who visited South India in the same century speaks of the kingdom of Cu-liya (Colika ?) on his way to the south. The Gaṅga king Srīvikrama (AD c. 644-669) is said is to have married a Çoḷa princess to whom was born the son Bhūvikrama (Lakshminarayana Rao and Panchamukhi, 1946).

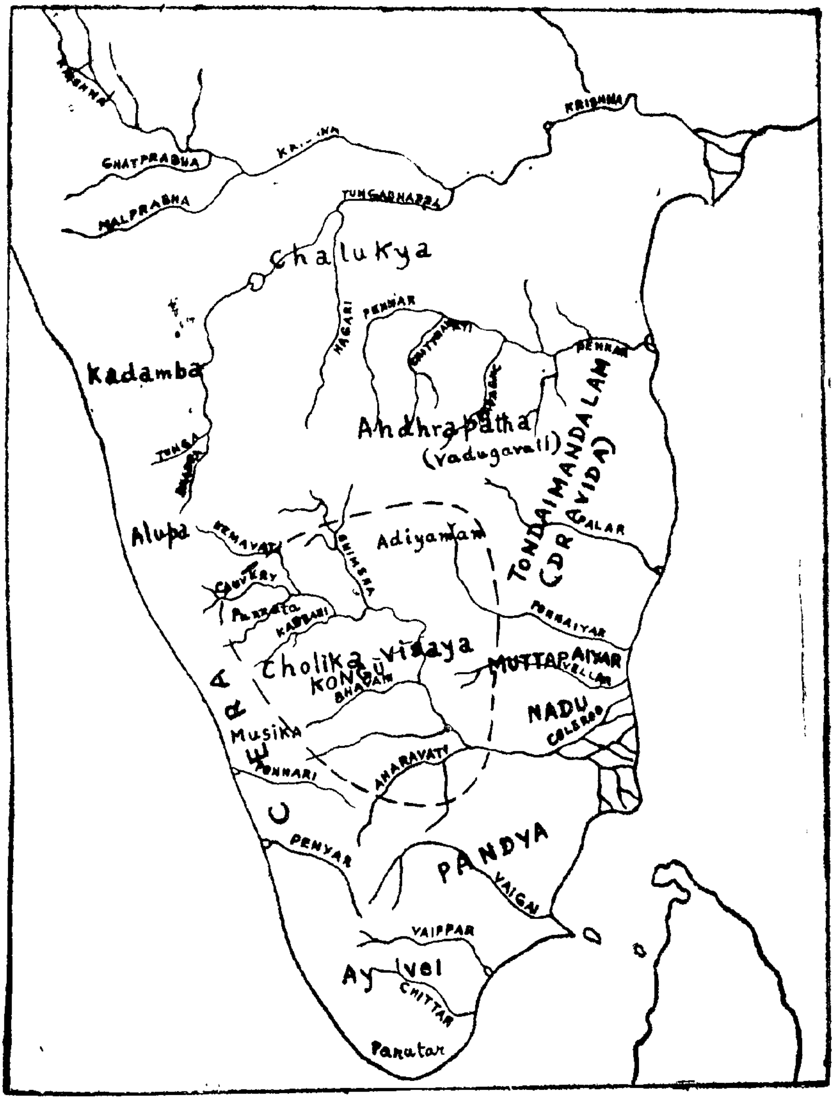
Therefore, the existence of a Çoḷa territory in the 7th century AD need not be doubted. The task is to locate its limits and to identify the kings or the dynasties that controlled the area. The ancient capital of the Çoḷa kings has been traditionally taken to be Uraiyūr, Tiruchi district (Nilakanta Sastri, 1955) or Paḷai-yāṛai, Tanjore district (Sadasiva Pandarattar, 1967). Yet nothing is shown of the succession of the kings or chieftains who had control over the towns. It is true, some authors have attempted to identify them with the names occurring in the so-called Çaṅkam literature. It must be frankly admitted, however, that the concept of a "Caṅkam Age" is itself wholly artificial and thoroughly baseless, thus rendering such efforts puerile and useless. At the same time, it should also be noted that the origin of the historically known dynasty of the Çoḷas starting from Vijayālaya is another yet-to-be resolved problem. The recent attempts to trace

him to the house of Srikantha (Pottappi-Coḷa) although not in a direct way (Subramaniam 1955; Mahalingam, 1969) have certainly opened a new path of inquiry. While it is probable that further studies along this line may clarify the situation that existed in the 9th century, it is doubtful if such studies would take us logically and sequentially backwards to the 7th century.

In other words, the question poses itself: Should we take the Coḷa in the 7th century records as representing a country or as a dynasty of rulers? While commenting on the Tiruchi inscriptions of Guṇabhara, Nilakanta Sastri (1955) observes: "Hultzsch understands by *vibhutim colanam* 'the great power of the Coḷas.' But as it is not a proper description of the position of the Coḷas after their conquest by Simhaviṣnu, and as such a description is hardly likely to be found in a Pallava grant, I take '*colanam*' to mean the country."

The Cu-li-ya country mentioned by Yuan Chwang has been presumed to represent the Siddhi 1000 and the Renadu 7000 (Nilakanta Sastri, 1955 b). Many other authors too have expressed a similar opinion. However, Yuan Chwang, it should be borne in mind, does not give the necessary clues to locate either the capital or the expanse of this country.

The three powers that dominated in the political scene of South India from about the middle of the 6th century to that of the 9th century are the Chālukyas of Badami, the Pallavas of Kāñchi and the Pāṇḍyas of Madurai. The Eastern Chālukyas and the Western Gaṅgās "took sides in the conflicts of the three kingdoms, sometimes with decisive results" (Nilakanta Sastri, 1955 b). The Coḷas of the Tamiḷ country are said to have had "practically disappeared except that a line of Telugu rulers bearing their name and claiming a traditional connection with their capital at Uṛaiyūr now ruled in the area now known as Rāyalaseema.' This situation clearly conveys that the Tamiḷ Coḷas were nowhere in the picture. Nīlakanta Sastri is followed by practically all historians in presuming that the "Ancient Coḷas" of the Tamiḷ land were lingering on here and there, along the banks of the



Map 1. Topography of *Cōḻikaviṣaya* in the 7th century AD.

Kāvēri. Whether this is so or whether the Tamiḷ Cōḷas had never come into existence is a point that is yet to be decided by future investigations.

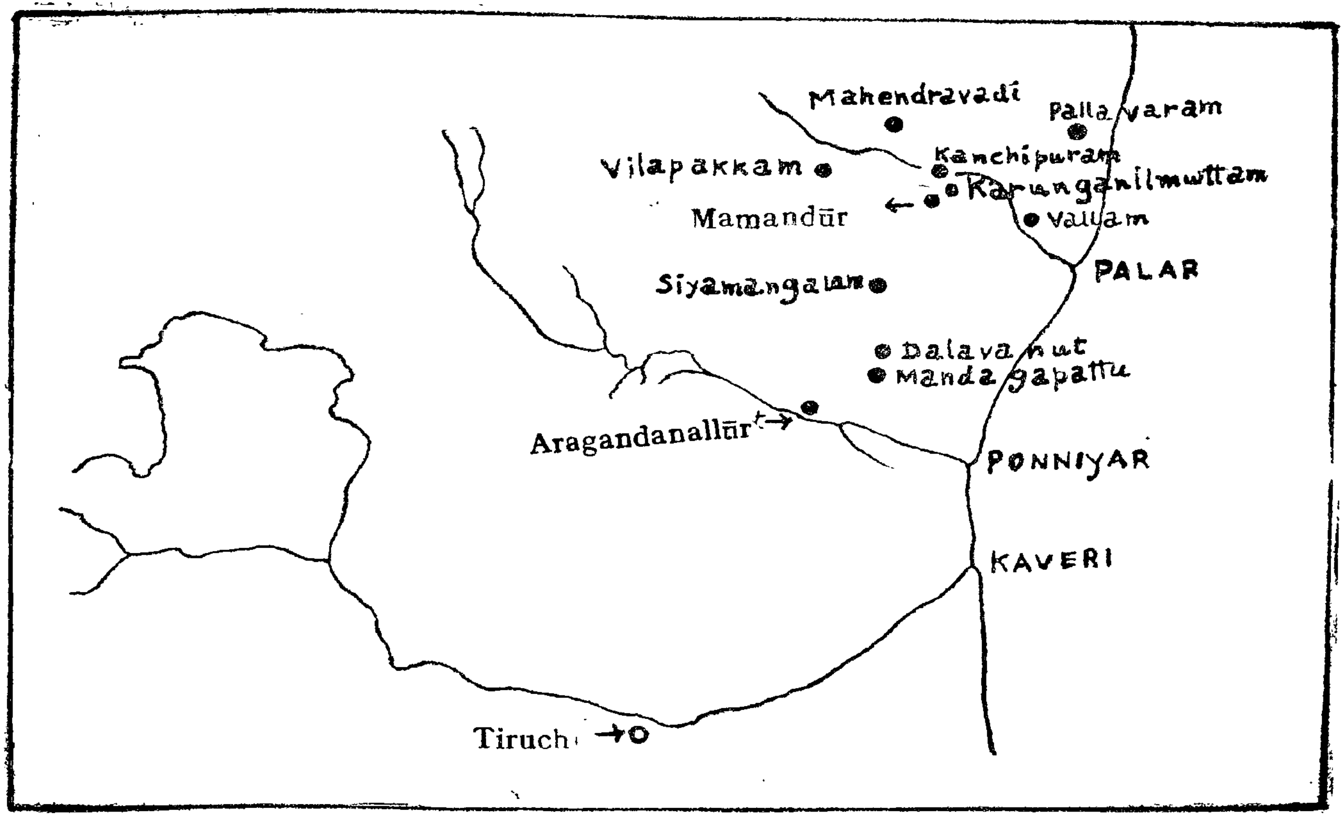
Yet, as already stated, that there existed a Cōḷa terrain—apart from that of the Telugu Cōḷas—cannot be denied in the face of available evidence. A general idea of the topographical divisions of the peninsular India in the 7th century AD is necessary at this point. The eastern coast-land north of the river Ponniyār, perhaps up to the river Krishna was the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam. The terrain between the rivers Ponniyār and Kāvēri and also some horizontal belt to the South of Kāvēri (northern parts of the modern Tiruchi and Tanjāvur districts) was the Muttaraiyar-nāḍu. The west-coast up to the modern Mangalore was the Cēra country. The area between the rivers Chandragiri and Nētravati including eastern parts of the modern Shimoga and Kaḍur districts was the country of the Alupas (Ramesh, 1970). To the north-east of this lay the Banavasi 12,000 country of the Kadambas. The region between the terrains of the Alupas and Kadambas on the west and the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam on the east was known as Āndhra-pātha (Vaduka-vaḷi) and this was the region through which the Western Chālukyas invaded the Kāvēri region. The Koṅgu country was surrounded on the west by the Alupa and Cēra; on the north by the Banavasi 12,000 and Āndhra-pātha; on the east by the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam and Muttaraiyar-nāḍu; and on the south by the Pāṇḍya (Map 1).

While such were the regional relationships, somewhat coinciding with the contemporary political powers, each of these areas were being ruled by more than one dynasty or branches of one major dynasty. For example, the Cēra land was divided between, among others, Āy-vels and Musikas; the Pāṇḍya land between Paratars and possibly different houses of the Pāṇḍyas themselves; the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam, between the Salankayanas, and Kāñchi and Nellore—Guntur branches of the Pallavas (Subramaniam, 1966). Similarly, the southern part of the Koṅgu country was under the authority of the Koṅgunis (who later became the Western Gaṅgas); the region between the Kāvēri and Kabhini was ruled by the

Punnata chiefs, and the Tagaḍur region (modern Dharmapuri) by the Adiyamān chieftains.

It should be emphasized that the borders of these political divisions were subjected to constant re-adjustments in the 7th century due to frequent battles amongst the neighbouring dynasties. The Koṅgunis expanded their dominion northwards by abrogating the Punnata region and eastwards by absorbing the territory represented by the modern Mysore, Baṅgalore and Kolār districts; one branch of the dynasty after the reign of Sri-vikrama appears to have invaded southwards and conquered the Koḍumbāḷur area in the Paṇḍyan land. There were continuous military encounters between the Gaṅgas on the one hand and the Pallavas and Muttaraiyars on the other. At the same time the Western Chālukyas were pressing southwards in their battles against the Pallavas.

The Cōḷa or Cōḷika-vasaya referred in the Asokan, Pallava and Chālukya inscriptions therefore should refer to some area overlapping the political and dynastic divisions referred to above. This word appears to denote a group of people who were ethnically and culturally homogenenous, perhaps speaking a somewhat similar dialect. The remnants of this group are now distributed in the area comprising South Mysore, Coorg, Coimbatore, Sālem and Tiruchi districts and goes by the name of Soḷīyars, Soligars and their variants. Thus the land inhabited by this group would be the Cōḷa (Colika-visaya) country. Thus the word Cōḷa under the contexts referred to above appears to mean merely the land where the Solīyars lived and nothing more. This area (demarcated by broken line in Map I) consisted of different regions, ruled by separate dynasties: the Punnata, the Gaṅga, the Kōnguni, the Adiyamān and probably the chiefs of Koḷi (modern Uṛaiyūr). Therefore the Cōḷa country figuring in the 7th century records need not necessarily point to Tiruchi or Uṛaiyūr alone but to any locus in the Colika-visaya that adjoined the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam. With particular reference to the Pallava records at Tiruchi it must be noted that the word *Colanam* occuring therein refers to the Colika-visaya and *not to any dynasty of rūlers* by that name. Likewise, Simhaviṣṇu's conquest of the Coḷa is to be understood as his victory over some



Map 2. Inscriptions and monuments of Mahēndravarman I.

part of the *Colika-visaya* and not as his having defeated the rulers of the Coḷa dynasty either at Uṛaiyūr or at any specific locale.

As already stated, the identification of the Pallava donor of the Tiruchi inscriptions as Mahēndravarman I, rests largely on flimsy and legendary grounds. There are no valid evidences for such an identification. That the architecture of the temple in which the inscriptions are found belongs to the Mahēndravarman's period is based purely on stylistic features, and as we know now, the Mahēndra style continued even after the reign of Mahēndravarman. In view of the Muttaraiyarnāḍu wedging between the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam and the Pāṇḍyanāḍu, it is doubtful if Mahēndravarman's dominion extended in the south beyond the river Ponniyār, in order to touch the river Kāvēri. Furthermore, the script of the inscriptions incised in the Tiruchi rock-cut temple also belongs to a type different from that in the authentic inscriptions of Mahēndravarman I, elsewhere. More than all, there is no other inscription or monument either of this king or of his successor, Narasimhavarman I south of Aṛagāṇḍanallūr on the bank of the river Ponniyār. In other words, all authentic monuments and inscriptions of Mahēndravarman I are strictly limited to the region between the river Ponniyār in the south and Pallāvaram in the north (Map 2). Under these circumstances, it appears very likely that the rock-cut cave temple and the "Pallava" inscriptions therein could not have been the benefactions of Mahēndravarman I. A new study and analysis of the architecture from an objective approach may lead to conclusions similar to the ones in reference to the rock-cut cave temple at Sittannavāsal and the musical inscription at Kuḍumiyāmalai, as a result of which these monuments are now removed from the Pallava alliance.

5. Siva temples in the 7th century Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam :

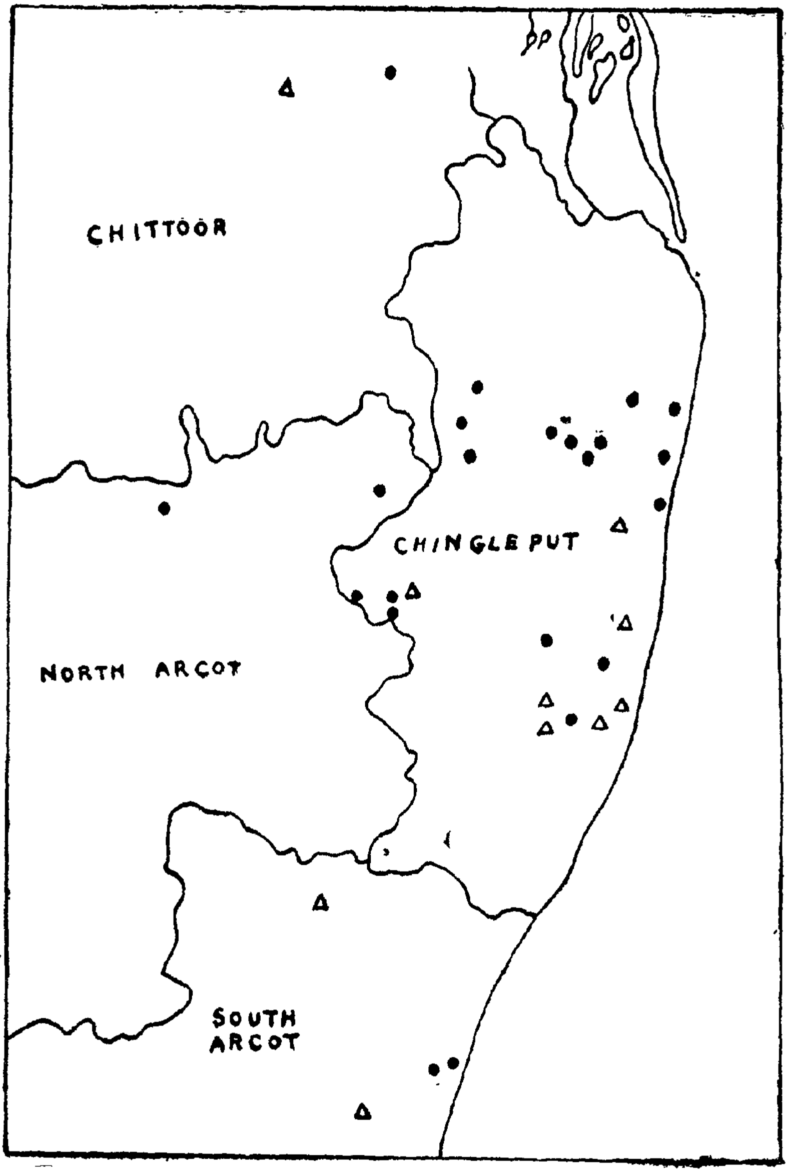
"The 7th century AD is a glorious period in the architectural history of the Pallavas. The largest number of temples sprang up through the period from Mahēndravarman I (AD 610–630) to Narasimhavarman II (AD 620/1–728/9) all over the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam, with a pronounced concentration in the modern Chingleput

district (Map 3). Amongst these, the temples at the following places are the Saivite institutions of worship:

Mahēndravarman I	
Maṇḍagappaṭṭu	South Ārcot
Dalavanūr	,,
Śīyamaṅgalam	,,
Kuraṅgāṇilmuṭṭam	North Ārcot
Pallāvaram	Chingleput
Māmaṇḍur	,,
Vallam	,,
Paramēśvaravarman I	
Mahābalipuram	,,
Tirukkaḻukunṟam	,,
Kūṟam	,,
Kālambakkam	,,
Narasimhavarman II	
Mahābalipuram	,,
Sāḷuvankuppam	,,
Kāñchipuram	,,
Panamalai	North Ārcot

Some of these temples have remained incomplete while others were fully constructed, thus having attained the status of 'live' institutions wherein the deity received worship and rituals. It should also be pointed out that all these institutions were built or carved out of stone.

The *tēvāram* trio are said to have sung in about 32 temples in the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam. A number of these are located in places quite near to these of the Pallava temples (Map 3) of the 7th century. In Kāñchipuram itself Tirujñānasambandar is said to have sung in Kaççi-nerikkaraikkādu and Kaççi-ēkampam; Tirunāvukkarasar in Kaççi-mēṟṟaḷi and Kaççi-ēkambam; Sundarar in Kāççi-anēkataṅgāpatam, Kaççi-ēkampam, Kaççi-meṟṟaḷi and Ōṇakāntantaḷi. Yet, as already noted, it is strange indeed that Tirunāvukkarasar,



Map 3. Saivite temples of the Pallavas of the 7th century AD (triangles) and the temples presumed to have been visited and sung about by the *tēvaram* trio (solid circles) in the Toṇḍai-maṇḍalam.

who is said to have been instrumental in converting Mahēndravarman I *to Śaivism failed to visit* and sing even in any of the Śiva shrines consecrated by his own disciple patron. Tirujñanasambandar also failed to take note of any Pallava-founded Śiva temple during his journey in the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam. Likewise, Sundarar, who has paid highest encomium to Kaḻarççiṅkan (identified as Narasimha II Rajasimha) as a devotee of Śiva, has totally ignored the Śiva temples built by this king at Kāñchi, although he has chosen to sing on some other temples in its neighbourhood.

What could be the reason for this reluctance on the part of the *tēvāram* trio? There appears to be an opinion in some quarters (not published as far as I know) that the *āgamas* prescribe only *structural* temples worthy of consecration and worship of Śiva and not *rock-cut* cave temples ; and that for this reason the *tēvāram* trio did not visit the Pallava founded temples. This appears to be a rather sentimental explanation. Although a large number of temples of the Pallavas are of the rock-cut type, the Vēdagiriśvara *temple* at Tirukkaḻukunṟam, Vidyāvinītapallavēsvaram at Kūram (Paramēśvaravarman I), Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchi (Narasimhavarman II), and shore-temple at Mahābalipuram (Narasimhavarman I) are structural constructions. Of these, the shore-temple was in existence in the time of Tirujñānasambandar and this along with the remaining ones in the time of Sundarar.

Incoherent and confused thinking has persisted ever since the time of publication of the Maṇḍagapaṭṭu inscription of Mahēndravarman I (EI. 17 No. 5), wherein it is *mentioned* that the king caused creation of a temple for the *trimūrtis* without the use of brick, timber, metal and mortar. Some scholars appear to infer from this that Mahēndra I was the very first ever to have instituted the art of creating temples in stone. The inscriptional statement does not allow such a wide and sweeping conclusion. What is implied in the statement is that this king created a temple out of stone alone, that is, by the process of scooping out in a boulder. It should also be noted that the inscription does not state that this king was the first to invent this technique in the whole of the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam or in the Tamiḻ country.

Again on the basis of the same inscription wholesale assumption has been made by several scholars that prior to the erection of the *lakṣitāyatanām* at Maṇḍagapaṭṭu all temples were constructed only of perishable materials like wood, brick, mortar, etc. Granting so for the sake of argument, the question arises whether there were so many (nearly 500) consecrated Śiva temples in the Tamiḻ country of the 7th century AD, all having been built of perishable materials. Secondly, it must be remembered that structural buildings in stone were in vogue prior to the Pallava period in several parts of India. Beginning from the Gupta period we have examples of Buddhistic structures exhibiting highly intricate and exquisite workmanship in stone. The earliest Hindu architecture in stone in South India may be traced from the 5th century AD in the temple complex at Aihole right up to the middle of the 7th century. The Western Chālukyas continued the tradition of temple building from the 6th century throughout their domain. Their political expansion caused a spread of this trend to the newer regions conquered by them. Their inroads to the south and their wars against the Pallavas in the 7th century established cultural diffusion. Thus the erection of structural temples in stone was quite a well known feature in the 7th century Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam.

It should be clearly understood that whether a temple was constructed of stone or of perishable materials depended mainly on economic factors. Stone has always been a relatively costlier material requiring specially skilled craftsmen to handle it than perishable materials like wood, brick, etc. Because of the ubiquitous use of the latter media in building the dwelling quarters of common men, there could not have been much difficulty in procuring workmen. Those who could afford—like kings, noblemen and the rich—could have chosen stone for erecting a temple ; those belonging to a lower economic status naturally had to depend on less permanent materials.

Therefore the query whether the temples built of perishable materials *always* preceded those that were constructed of stone has no meaning. It is true, however, that the Cōḻa records of the 10th century refer to the re-building of some temples in stone which had existed earlier has structures of brick. On the basis of this infor-

mation, a rather sweeping generalisation has been reached to the effect that *all* temples in the Tamiḻ country—particularly those that were visited by the *tēvāram* trio—*originated only as brick foundations*. Cōḻa later being replaced by stone. It should be noted that there are several Cōḻa records of the same period referring to the erection of new temples directly in stone and that there are clear indications in the compositions of the *tēvāram* trio that many of the temples presumed to have been sung about by them were structures of stone (Kaṟṟaḷi).

According to the stabilised tradition, the *tēvāram* trio visited the following places in the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam (Map 3) :—

Aççiṟupākkam
Ālankaṭu
Ālakkōyil (Tirukkaççūr)
Idaiççuram
Iḷambayamkōttūr
Irumbaimākāḷam
Kalatti
Kaḻukkuṉṟam
Kaḷḷam (Tirukaḷḷil)
Kāñchīpuram
Kuruṅgaṉilmuṭṭam
Kūvam
Mākaral
Mārpēru
Mullaivāyal, Vada-
Mayilai (Mylāpore)
Oṟṟiyūr
Oṭtur
Pāççūr
Pāḍi
Panaṅkāṭṭur
Vakkarai
Vallam (Valam)
Vānmiyūr
Veṇpākkam
Vēṟkattu
Volindiappattu (Araśili)
Ūṟal (Takkōlam)

It should be especially noted that none of the temples in these places are Pallava foundations. From the points of view of architecture and sculpture, they present unmistakable features of the Imperial Cōḷa period; this is confirmed by the epigraphs that have been discovered in them. (Balasubramanyam, 1906, 1971). If the *tēvāram* trio visited these temples in the 7th century AD, who could have been the founder-donors of these temples? The Cōḷas of the Tamiḻ country were nowhere in the contemporary scene. Even if it is granted that they were lingering on as a weak and subdued house in Uṟaiyūr or Paḻaiyāṟai as postulated by some scholars, how could they build these temples in the stronghold of the Pallava territory?

Tirujñānasambandar has one decad on the temple at Pallavaniççuram and two on that at Mahēndrappaḷḷi (modern Koyilaḍipāḷayam). The former place has been identified as the temple that is situated ½ mile east of Caykkaḍu, lying 9 miles south-east of Sirkaḻi, while the latter is 4 miles north-east of Aççāpuram, which, in turn, is situated 3 miles from Koḷḷiḍam railway station. It will thus be seen that the locale of both these temples is clearly outside the southern limits of the Pallava dominion of the 7th century. Furthermore, in spite of the Pallava-sounding names, the temples have nothing in common with the Pallava architecture of the 7th century AD. It is doubtful if these were Pallava erections at all.

6. **Śaivite iconography**:

The Sōmaskanda motif repeats itself in several of the Pallava temples of the 7th century. This panel formed the chief sculptural representation in the main cells of temples dedicated to Śiva and was obviously the object of worship (Soundara Rajan, 1969). While it is true that the *tēvāram* trio never visited the Pallava temples and while it is also true that they have referred in their compositions to a large number of Śaivite iconographic concepts like Tripūradahana, Brahmaśiraççhēdana, Ravaṇānugraha, Ardhanāri, Dakṣiṇāmurti, Tāṇḍava, etc., that are found sculptured in the Pallava temples, the Sōmaskaṇda theme is conspicuous by its absence. In other words, it appears that while many of the Śaivite iconographic

concepts were in vogue in the 7th century and continued into the following centuries of the Coḷa period, the Sōmaskaṇda motif for some reason lost its importance in the Śaivism of the Coḷas and was relegated to the status of a processional icon (*utsavamūrti*). Would not this situation indicate that the *tēvāram* trio should have lived at a period when the Somaskaṇda icon had ceased to be the main object of worship in the Śiva temples?

Severāl *pūrāṇic* themes found graphic representation on the walls of the Pallava temples during the 7th century. Amongst these may be mentioned a variety of *anugrahamūrtis* (Ravaṇānugraha, Nandiśānugraha, Candeśānugraha, Brahma-anugraha, Indra-ānugraha, Viṣṇuanugraha, Kāma-anūgraha) and *samhāramūrtis* (Tripurāntaka, Gajasamhāra, Daksayāgñabhaṅga, Kālasamhāra and Brahmasiraççhēdana). Episodes from Kiratārjunīya were also a favourite theme. The *tēvārams* refer to some of these episodes like Rāvaṇānugraha (as also Rāvāṇa lifting the Kailās mountain), Kālasamhāra, Brahmasiraççhēdana, Daksayagñabhaṇga, Tripura-samhāra and Gajasamhāra. Also they speak of Andhakāsuravada Kāmadahana and Jālandharavada, which have no parallels in the Pallava sculptures. In other words, the *attavīrattāna* (the loci of the eight heroic acts of Śiva) concept had become codified during the time of the *tēvāram* trio. It is to be particularly noted that the *anugrahamūrtis* pertaining to Naṅdi, Iṅdra, Viṣṇu, etc. find no reference in the *tēvārams*. The episodes of Markandēya and of Śiva drinking poison are also new entrants into the *puranic* lore of the *tēvāram* period.

Of the *tāṇḍava* forms of Śiva, the Pallava sculptures depict the *samhāra* types in addition to what may be designated as *sāndhya* or *pradōsa tāṇḍava*. Characteristically in these poses Śiva is shown as possessing more than two pairs of arms, each hand holding a weapon of some kind and the icon as a whole presenting a fierce aspect. The *tēvāram* trio not only refer to these aspects of Śiva's dance but also to the *ānandatāṇḍava*, a form depicting the *pañcakṛtya* (Five-fold functions) of Śiva. This concept is exclusive to the Kashmir school of Śaivism (*pratyabhigña Darsana*). Some followers of this cult settled down at Chidambaram

in the period of Parantaka I (A.D. 907–955). In unambiguous terms the *tēvāram* trio refer to the *ānandatāṇḍava* at Tillai (Chidambaram). The origin of the *Pratyabhigña* school in Kashmir is itself in the middle part of the 9th century, and as such the *tēvāram* trio would not have sung about the Dancer of Tillai in the 7th century (Swamy, 1972 d).

The *tēvāram* trio refer to *Kāmakōṭṭam.* As Srinivasan (1960) has pointed out, a separate shrine for the consort in the temples of Tamiḻ Nāḍu is of a late origin. There is an ample degree of confirmation to this view from a study of the history of the Gōlaki school of Śaivism in the Tamiḻ country (Swamy, 1972 d), This cult of Śaivism in its original habitat has been greatly influenced by *Śakti* worship and, as far as evidence goes, came to the Tamiḻ country in the middle part of the 10th century. This new entrant began to exert itself firmly in the time of Rājarāja I, which, however, is another trend in the history of Śaivism in the Tamiḻ country.

Śrinivasan (1960) has drawn attention to the appearance of Ganēśa in the Pallava sculpture only from the time of Gajasimha, that is, the late part of the 7th century, which clearly, means that Tirunāvukkarasar and Tirujñānasambandar could not have referred to this deity in the early part of the same century. Srinivasan therefore suggests that Tirujñānasambandar could have lived about AD 730.

The sculptured representation of deities like Dakṣināmūrti, Ardhanāri, Candēsa, Liṅgodbhava, etc., are found in the Pallava temples of the 7th/8th century. Many of these find repeated mention in the tēvārams. As the *tēvāram* trio did not visit any of these temples, they must have had some other independent source for having recorded the incidents concerning these motifs. Either the trio were conversant with the concerned legends or could have drawn inspiration from the anthropomorphic representations of the incidents sculptured in the Cōḻa temples. These icons began to appear in profusion in the Cōḻa founded temples of the 10th century. As Srinivasan (1960) has pointed out, in so far as Ganēsa is concerned, the icon of this deity is spoken of by Tirujñānasambandar as having been found on the southern

wall of the *garbhagṛha*. This clearly means a period when the loci of the *kōṣtha* images had attained codification. As the largest number of the temples visited and sung about by the *tēvāram* trio are undoubtedly Cōḷa temples, would not this situation suggest corresponding date for the trio?

7. The Liṅga cult and temple rituals:

That there were no *S'ivaliṅgas* consecrated in the Pallava shrines of the 7th century has to be recognized as a fact; there are no valid evidences to the contrary (Soundara Rajan, 1969; Mahalingam, 1969). Laboured and assertive arguments are however advanced (Nagaswamy, 1971) to presume the presence of *liṅga* in the temples built by Mahēndravarman I. Such attempts are obviously the necessary consequences of the unwarranted assumption that Tirunāvukkarasar was the contemporary of Mahēndravarman I. It may also be pointed out here that the type of *liṅga* implanted in the Pallava temples at a later date (facetted type) belongs to a different morphological category than the ones (cylindrical type) in the Muttaraiyar, Pāṇḍya and Cōḷa temples.

That the *liṅga* concept was well known to the *tēvāram* trio is witnessed by their own references which are not infrequent in their writings. They refer to the aniconic form of Śiva not only as *liṅga* but also of *tāṉu, kampam, tāparam,* etc., in the context of referring to the story of Brahma's and Visnu's search for the beginning and end of Śiva (*cōti-liṅga—Jytirliṅgam*) or to that of Caṇdēsa (*tāparam*).

It is strange, however, that none of the trio make more direct references to the *liṅga* that had been consecrated in the temples of their choice. Nor are their writings explicit about the *liṅga* of the *garbhagṛha* in the temples. Therefore questions such as these arise: What could have been the main deity in the temples visited by them? Could it have been an anthropomorphic icon of Śiva or the aniconic *S'ivaliṅga*? If it was the latter, why is it that they do not refer to the object of worship by its name generally ending in the suffix-*Is'varā* or by the numerous names by which Śiva's anthropomorphic icons are known as is the practice in modern times?

Nearly half the number of temples sung about by the *tēvāram* trio are located in the Cōḷa country. A close study of the early Cōḷa epigraphs concerning these temples clearly reveal the fact that the name of the deity was chosen after the village or town in which the temple was situated, eg. Mudūkunṟamudaiya Mahā-dēva, Tiruvoṟṟiyur Mahādēva, Tiruppāççur uḍaiyar, Tiruverkkātu uḍaiyar Mahādēva, Tiruviḍaimarudūr udaiyār, ·Tirupuṟambiyam udaiyār or merely as Mulattānamudaiyār, Tirukaṟṟali Mahādēvar, etc., irrespective of the locale. This was the situation that was continued to be in vogue as late as the 18th century. The application of the iconographic names to the *liṅga* is decidedly a latter tradition. As will be shown in another contribution, the concept of the *sthalavṛikṣa* ('temple-tree') and the name of the *liṅga* derived therefrom is a tradition that appears to have commenced from as late as the 17th century AD.

The procedure adopted by the *tēvāram* trio is not much different from the custom seen in the 10th to 15th century epigraphs of the Tamiḻ country. A large number of the *tēvārams* sing about the Lord of such and such a place, rather than referring to Him by any specific proper name. Most repeatedly He is described in the context of *Purānic* episodes rather than in his iconographic or aniconographic forms. The trio do not appear to have become much interested in the architectural or sculptural representations of the Lord on the walls of the temple excepting in a casual way. In other words, they seem to have sung about the Lord of a place glorifying His acts of heroism and greatness, of His power of control over living beings and of His faculty of conferring beatitude on them. The temple, the presiding deity and the architectural/sculptural representations therein were all more external symbols to them, signifying Śiva in His somewhat all comprehensive and generalized aspects. The trio, however, refer to certain aspects of the *āgamic* tenets, to the modes of worship and rituals in the temples, to the 14 *upaçāras* offered to the deity, and to the religious festivals and ceremonies, as also to the diverse kinds of worship through prayer, song, chanting of *mantras*, dance, etc. Yet, one is left with the over-all feeling that the trio were decidedly outside the fold of the ritualistic traditions of the temple. They were *bhaktas*, perhaps

of the type 'paramanaiyē pāḍuvār'; they thus, sang only about Him, in His *purānic* role but did not become themselves involved in the ritualistic worship that was in vogue in the temples.

Therefore the pure *Bhakti* cult of the *tēvāram* trio was very different from the contemporary religious practice that existed in the Śiva temples. A careful reading of the *tēvārams* brings to light the strong *āgamic* grip over the people who offered worship in the temples as prescribed in the *āgamas*. This situation is clearly indicative of the high degree of completeness and codification that the *āgamic* canons had reached at the time. A couple of the 7th century Pallava inscriptions refer to *āgama* and one of Paramēsvaravarman I specifically refers to the ritualistic mode in a Siva temple; *pūja, snāpana, kusuma, gandha, dhūpa, dīpa, havis, upahara, bali,* which are to be conducted to the accompaniment of conch and music. The *āgamic* legacy of later period prescribe 16 steps for the worship of the presiding deity of a temple (*liṅga*). Although the different canonical texts are by no means uniform. either in the sequence of the steps or in the content of these steps, all recognize the 16 steps as constituting the *śōdaśopacāra*. The *tēvāraṃs* mention nearly the full gamut of steps, which means that the authors of the decads should have lived at a period when the *āgama* texts had reached fuller maturity and near completeness.

The *tēvārams* refer to the religious cults that were in vogue when they were composed. They are the *akaccamaya* and *puṛaccamaya*. The names of the cults that were accommodated in the first category are not known. It is generally believed that it represents a group of Saivite sects. Rājamanikkam (1958), following *Tirumantiram,* contends that there were six subsects, but does not name them. Venkaçami (1959) counts them as four: *Pāsupata, Kapālika, Mahāvrata* and *Bhairava*. Doraisami Pillai (1958) mentions three of them—*Pāsupata. Kapālika, and Mahāvrata*; he does not, however, indicate the source of his information. Tirunāvukkarasar, in his decads, speaks of *Śaivā, Pāsupata, Kapālika* and *Mahāvrata*. Granting that the play *Mattavilāsa-*

prahāsanam is the work of Mahēndravarman I*, we see only two of the above Śaivite subjects—*Pāsupata* and *Kapālika*—having figured in it.

Although many authors have written about the religious following of the Pallavas of the 7th/8th centuries, much re-thinking and fresh analysis is needed in order to have a clearer and accurate understanding of the situation. For the present, suffice to note that critical study of the 7th century monuments of this dynasty impresses the uniformity of the Śaivite cult that was in vogue. This was the theme of the *trimūrti* cult the *mūrtis* being worshipped in their anthropomorphic form—Brahma Viṣnu and Śiva in the aspect of Śomāskanda—in spite of the fact that Śiva appears to have been specially favoured. The sculptured panels in the contemporary temples clearly demonstrate the inclusion of Brahma and Viṣnu: often in the very same panel or in adjacent panels to the Śomāskanda motif. The Śaivism of the Pallavas is said to be of the Pāsupata type (Mahalingam, 1969). This system, it must be noted, underwent significant changes both in practical and philosophical contents during its period of growth. Bhasarvagna's Ratna-tīka (AD 940-980) prescribes that the Pāsupata follower should address morning prayers to Brahma, Viṣnu and Rudra for two hours before sun-rise (Chakroberti, 1970). Is it likely that this was the specific type of Pāsupata doctrine that was in currency during the 7th century AD in the Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam region?

In spite of the fact that the *tēvāram* trio were non-chalant of the main deity of the temple and of the rituals connected with it, we have already seen that they do refer to *liṅga* in the

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* In spite of the accepted opinion that this play is a work of Mahēndravarman I, there is yet a shadow of uncertainty about its authorship and date of composition. This play centres around a Kāpālika drunken couple, a pāsupata and *bhikus* thrown in as *dramatis personae*. Their acts and behaviour as depicted in the play represent a degenerate and, debased state of the respective cults. These Saivite cults became decadent sometime during the 12th/13th centuries and therefore the presumed 7th century appears to be a date too early for the play.

context of some *purānic* stories. Therefore, it is clear that they were well aware of the an iconic object of worship in the temples of their time. In so far as the Pallava land is concerned, there were no *liṅgas* consecrated in the temples constructed by the rulers and the temples elsewhere in the Coḷa country referred to by them could not have been in existence in the 7th century AD.

A large number of Śiva temples which the *tēvāram* trio have sung about together with their references to many others (*vaippu-sthalas*) mentioned by them in the *tēvārams* is clear enough indication of the *āgamic* type of worship that had become stabilized in the country. People at large visited these institutions and offered worship to the main deity consecrated therein mainly according to the injunctions of the *āgamas*. In contrast, the attitude and outlook of the *tēvāram* trio do not appear to have involved direct participation in the ritualistic modes of the temples. They sang the praises glories and mightiness of Śiva in devotion pure and simple. Thus they contributed the *bhakti* element into religion. Bhāskarāçarya (10th century) and Aparārka (12th century) recognize two varieties of contemporary Śaiva religion: *Śaiva āgamic*-(ritual centred) or *Naiyāyika* and Pāsupata (*bhakti* centred) or *Vaiśēsika*. A much later author, Haribhadrasūri (?14th century) notes four kinds of worshippers of Śiva: *Bharatas*, *Bhaktas*, *Laiṅgikas*, *Tapasas*. The first kind are those that accept certain specific vows and conduct worship in the temples while the others bow from a distance. Is it not more probable that the *tēvāram* trio belonged to the latter kind, more specifically the *Bhaktas*?

Tirunāvukkarasar's *tēvārams* speak of Lord Śiva as the embodiment of *mantra* and *tantra*; and of the concept of the human body as a temple. The second theme repeats itself in the vaçana literature of Vīra-Śaiva saints of the Kannaḍa country. Concepts such as these found formulation and codification into the *āgamas* at a much later period than the 7th century AD, (that is) at a period when the temples and the rituals therein had left a strong impact on the people.

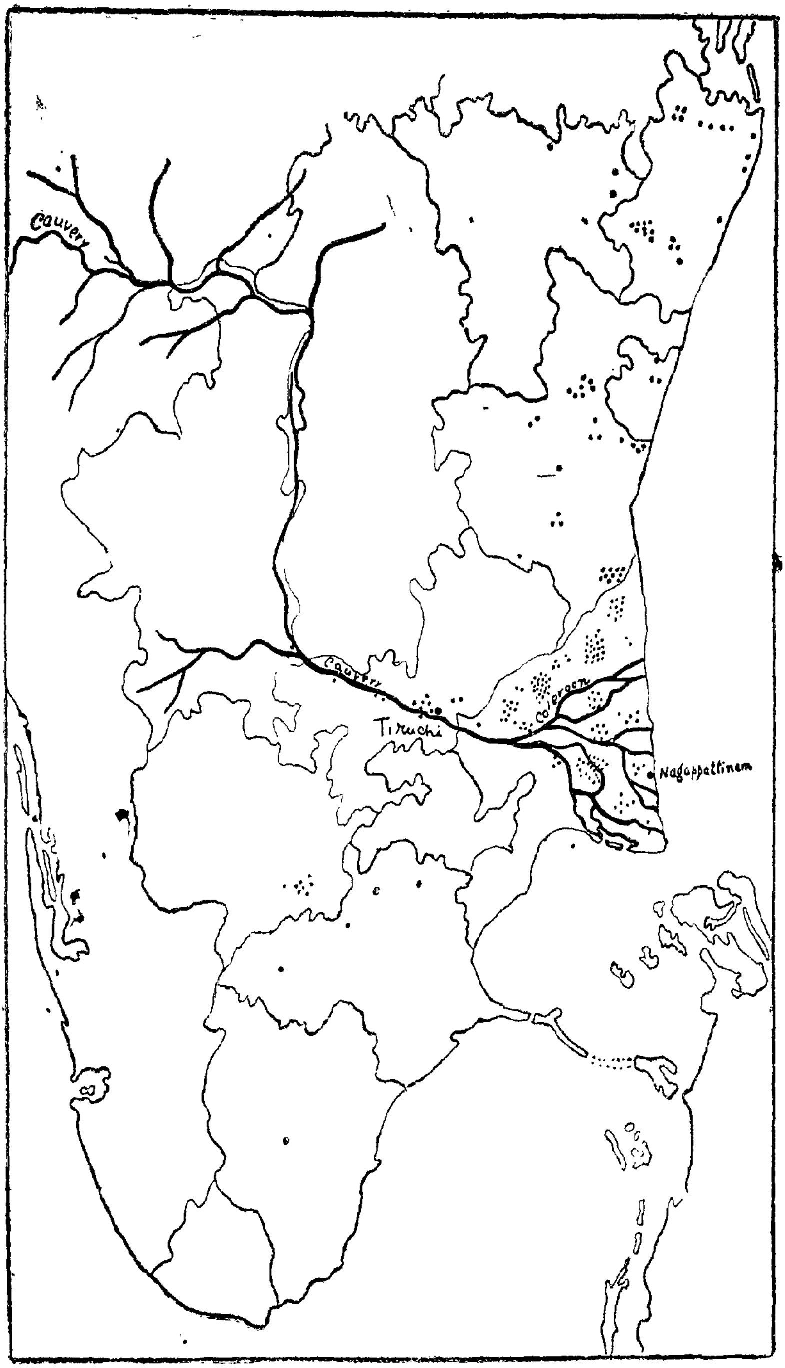
CRITIQUE 2

The only assumption that I have made while writing the last topics under critique 1 is the traditional insistence that the *tēvāram* trio visited 275 temples. Most of them are dispersed in the Tamiḻ country and a few outside it. The latter include Tirukkōnamalai and Tirukkētīśvaram in Sri Laṅka, and Tiruparuppadam (Śriśailam), Indrānīlaparvatam, Anēkataṅgapatam, Tirukkēdāram and Nodittānmalai (Kailās) in the northern beyonds, some in the Himālayan region. The question naturally arises whether the trio or any one of them actually visited these places that are so far remote from their chief arena of activity.

This question must have occurred to several others in the past and an explanatory story has taken birth in regard to Tirunāvukkarasar. In his old age, due to weakness in body, he could not negotiate the long and difficult route to the Mount Kailās; at one point he fell down in exhaustion. The Lord, having come to know this, Himself came down to the spot and stood before Tirunāvukkarasar. This story is perhaps equally applicable to the trio in general, particularly in reference to those places in the Himālayas and Sri Laṅka. The remaining temples, perhaps. at least some of them, could have been visited by them.

In addition on the 275 temples presumed to have been sung about by the *tēvāram* trio, the body of their decads mention slightly more than an equal number of contemporary temples (*vaippusthalas*). While the loci of many of these have eluded identification and fixation, the total number of over 500 temples is really staggering for the 7th century Tamiḻ Nādu. It should be noted, however, that the largest number of these were situated in Cōḻa country of the 10th century ruled by the Vijayālaya line of kings.

We have seen that there was no politically recognizable Cōḻa dynasty of rulers, nor a country belonging to them in the early Pallava period. If the land of the Sōḻiyars are taken to mean the Cōḻa country referred to in the Pallava and Chālukya records of the 7th century, it appears to be an area surrounded



Map 4. Spectrum of temples presumed to have been visited and sung about by the *tēvaram* trio.

on all sides by other dynasties, and the *Coḷika-visaya* itself having been divided amongst the Koṅgunis, the Punnata chiefs, the Adiyamāns. etc. The *tēvāram* trio are said to have actually visited 190 temples in the Coḷa-nāḍu alone. Excepting a couple of these, the largest number lay outside, eastwards of the *Coḷika-visaya.* And this eastward land was shared from north to south between the Pallavas, the Muttaraiyars and the Pāṇḍyas. We know of temples which the latter two dynasties had built in the 7th century in these parts. The trio are, however, credited with having visited 14 temples in the Pāṇḍya·nādu, but all these lie south of Madurai. Furthermore, there is no evidence that these temples were in existence in the 7th century AD·

Under these circumstances it is extremely perplexing that there should have been 500 Śiva temples which were known to the *tēvāram* trio in the Tamiḻ country of the 7th century AD. It is much more perplexing to identify their authors. However, there appears to be one clue revealed by the distribution spectrum and architectural idiom of the temples which are presumed to have been visited by the trio. The spectrum exhibits a diffuse radiation on either bank of the river Kavēri between Tiruchi and Nāgappaṭṭinam (Map. 4). Architecturally and iconographically these temples conform to a norm with little fluctuations. This situation raises the question whether it could not be that these temples belong to a specific period of history and to a particular school of craftsmanship?

It is necessary also to bear in mind in this connection that on several counts, the age of the *tēvāram* trio points to a much later period than the 7th century AD. We have also seen that an analysis of the "external" factors amply confirm this. One of the important points that has emerged out of the analysis concerns the proliferation of Śaivism into sub-cults/sub-sects in the period of the *tēvāram* trio. The dominant cult was the *āgama*-propelled, temple-centred, ritual-oriented *liṅga* worship. Into this matrix was interpolated the *purāṇa*-propelled, love-dominated praise-oriented *bhakti* cult of the *tēvāram* trio.

III. CORRELATIONS

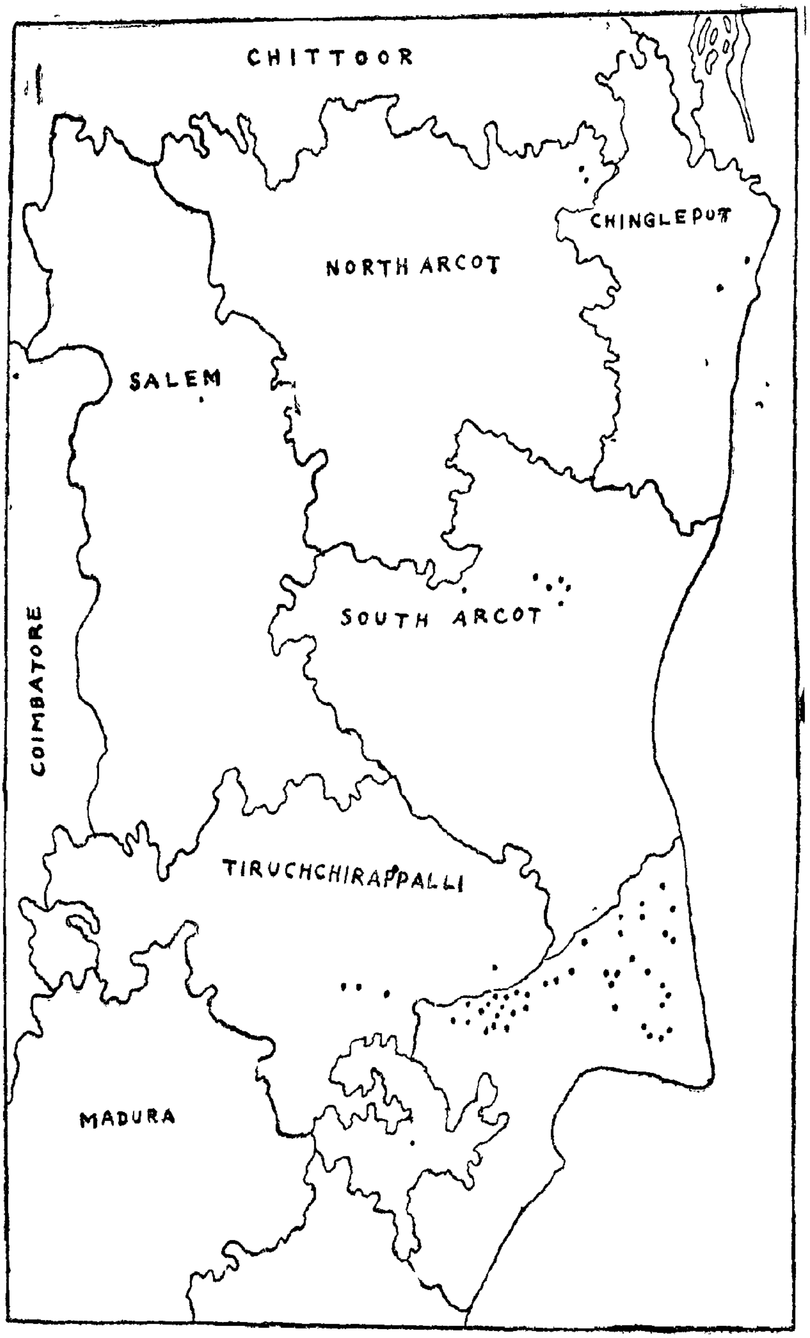
8. Special factors and, temples presumed to have been visited by the tēvāram trio.

As stated earlier, according to tradition, the 275 temples and places which were visited and sung about by the *tēvāram* trio are accommodated under the following topographical units:

Coḷa nāḍu	190 temples
Toṇḍai nāḍu	32 ,,
Naḍu nāḍu	22 ,,
Pāṇḍya nāḍu	14 ,,
Koṅgu nāḍu	7 ,,
Vaḍa nāḍu	8 ,,
Īḷa nādu	2 ,,
Tuḷuva nādu	1 temple
Malai nādu	1 ,,

As already observed, the temples in the Vaḷa nāḍu, Īḷa nāḍu and Tuḷuva nāḍu, may be presumed to have been sung about by them without having actually visited them. The remaining land divisions, it must be emphasized, do not conform to any known political, dynastic or geographical units. The first five and the last taken together, however, suggest an area of cultural and linguistic homogeneity. The area corresponding to these units in the 7th century AD. represents a heterogeneous assemblage, culturally and linguistically, being shared by the Pallavas, Pāṇḍyas, Koṅgunis, etc., into which the Western Chālukyas were all the time trying to build inroads. Such a disturbed environment obviously could not have given birth to a rather homogeneous and stereotyped architecture and sculpture all over the area.

A single ruling power over a territory appears to be the most congenial pre-requisite for the evolution and stabilization of a uniform cultural norm. The territorial units Coḷa nāḍu, Toṇḍai nāḍu, Naḍu nāḍu, Pāṇḍya nāḍu and Koṅgu nāḍu, all together, must have become subjected to the impact of such a power during some period of history. Such a situation prevailed



Map 5. Cōḻa-founded temples of the 10th century AD, presumed to have been visited and sung about by the *tēvāram* trio.

in the late 9th and in the major part of the 10th centuries AD during the reigns from Āditya I to Uttama Coḷa.

Balasubramanyam's recent studies (1966, 1971) spotlight the temple building activities of the 10th century Coḷa kings. Among other items, his studies reveal the existence of nearly 100 Śiva temples, each with complete complements of architectural and sculptural embellishments. These temples are distributed in the modern Tiruchi, Tañjāvūr, South Ārcot, North Ārcot, and Chingleput districts, overlapping the traditional topographical units, Coḷa-, Naḍu-, and Pāṇḍya-nāḍus.

Of the 10th century Śiva temples listed by Balasubrahmanyam, nearly 40% have been sung about by the *tēvaram* trio. The spectrum of distribution of these (Map 5) reflects the same trend as that of the nearly 270 temples presumed to have been visited by them (Map 4). The break-up figures are as follows:

	10th century Coḷa temples sung about by the *tēvāram* trio	10th century Coḷa temples not sung about by the *tēvāram* trio	Total
Āditya I	19	26	45
Parāntaka I	16	13	29
Uttama Coḷa	5	15	20
Total	40	54	94

This factual data leads to certain obvious inferences: (a) that there were quite a number of temples that had attained institutional stability and architectural completeness of which the *tēvāram* trio chose only a few for the purpose of glorification; (b) that the largest concentration of the temples sung about, lay in the 10th century in the heart of Tamiḷ-nāḍu that is, the land ruled by the Vijayālaya line of Coḷa kings with their chief seat in the Tañjāvūr district; (c) that the expansion of Coḷa power during the time of Parāntaka I and Āditya I radiating in the northern,

southern and western directions was accompanied by the diffusion of Śaivite religion and (d) that as a result, numerous temples for Śiva came into existence all over the Coḷa territory.

Why the *tēvāram* trio restricted their choice only to a limited number of temples/places for their visit in spite of the fact that similar Śiva temples exhisted all over the Tamiḻ country—many of them lying quite near to those sung about by them—is not clear. Nor can a convincing explanation be given as to why they selected only such and such temples. Any guess would be a plausible answer !

Verse 18 of the Anbil copper-plates attest to the building of a large number temples by Āditya I on the banks of the river Kāvēri. Balasubrahmanyam's (1966) recent studies identify 45 temples constructed by this king, most of them being situated in the locus specified by the Anbil record. His son added another 29 temples, some in extended loci (Balasubrahmanyam, 1971). Of these put together nearly half the number were visited by the *tēvaram* trio and received *padikams* (decads).

Balasubrahmanyam's studies are very revealing and are of a singular significance. His conclusions drawn from a scientific approach, are refreshingly contradictory to the traditional dating of the temples that are presumed to have been visited by the *tēvāram* trio. His inferences categorically confirm that the concerned temples were built by the Çoḷā kings of the 10th century. Yet he appears to be strongly influenced by the legendary tradition and has cautiously—though not warranted—added riders to the effect that such and such temple was visited by one, two or all of the *tēvāram* trio and that therefore there should have existed an earlier shrine in place of the existing one ! It is sheer cussedness to maintain that a nucleus of these temples were in xistence in the 7th century.

9. Relative chronology of the tēvāram trio :

Attention has been drawn on a previous page :to the two sub-cults of Śaivism—possibly among others—that had been in vogue in the 10th century Tamiḻ Nāḍu - the *āgamic* (*tantric*) -

centred cult of the temples and the *bhakti*-centred cult of the *tēvāram* trio. It should also be borne in mind that there are no evidences to presume direct cross-currents between the two during that period. This background is important in discussing the relative chronology of the *tēvāram* trio.

Apart from positing the *tēvāram* trio in the 7th century A.D., the tradition also asserts that Tirunāvukkarasar was an elder contemporary of Tirujñānasambandar; and that Sundarar followed the latter in sequence with no appreciable time-lag. Highly laboured attempts have been made to establish this chronological order, the sole source being a statement that occurs in the Tirumuṟaikkaṇḍappurāṇam (Vellaivaranan, 1962). In a sense, Vellaivaranan's justification appears to be redundant as it is also the generally accepted view for one reason or the other.

Through the painstaking and highly productive studies of Bālasubrahmanyam (1966, 1971) some new data have become available which can be used to test the validity of the presumed relative chronology of the *tēvāram* trio. After taking into consideration all the available epigraphic data, architectural features and iconographic characters, Bālasubrahmānyam has convincingly determined the period of construction of a number of Cola temples. While there may be differences of opinion in reference to the dating of about a dozen temples, on the whole, it must be admitted that the conclusions reached by the author in reference to the remainder is impeccable. The following table lists the temples/places that are presumed to have been visited and sung about by the *tēvāram* trio.

District	Location of the Temple	Tirunāvukkarasar	Tirujñānasambandar	Sundarar
	Āditya I (AD 871-907)			
Tañjāvūr	Vedāraṇyam	*	*	*
,,	Tiruviḍaimarudur	*	*	*
,,	Tiruççoṟṟutturai	*	*	*
,,	Tiruvaiyāṟu	*	*	*

District	Location of the Temple	Tirunāvukkarasar	Tirujñānasambandar	Sundarar
Tañjāvūr	Tirunāgēsvaram	*	*	*
,,	Tirumaḻapāḍi	*	*	*
,,	Tiruveṇkādu	*	*	*
,,	Tiruppuṛambiyam	*	*	*
Chingleput	Tirukkaḻukunṛam	*	*	*
Tañjāvūr	Tillaisthānam	*	*	
,,	Tiruvēdikkuḍi	*	*	
,,	Tiruppaḻanam	*	*	
,,	Kanḍiyur	*	*	
,,	Tirukkāṭṭuppalli	*	*	
Tiruchi	Tirupparāitturai	*	*	
Tañjāvūr	Tiruvēlvikkudi		*	*
,,	Tiruppūnturutti	*		
Tiruchi	Tiruveṛumbur	*		
Tañjāvūr	Tiruppanandāḷ		*	
,,	Tirunālurmayānam		*	
Tiruchi	Kilpāḷuvur		*	
N. Ārcot	Takkolam		*	
,,	Tiruvaḷḷam	*		
S. Ārcot	Tiruvakkarai		*	

Parāntaka I (AD 907-955)

Tiruchi	Uyyakkoṇḍan	*	*	*
. Ārcot	Tiruvāmattūr	*	*	*
Chingleput	Tiruvoṛṛiyūr	*	*	*
Tañjāvūr	Vijayamaṅgai	*	*	
,,	Tirukkaḷavūr	*	*	
N. Ārcot	Tirumaṛpēṛu	*	*	
S. Ārcot	Tirukkovaḷūr	*	*	
,,	Grāmam	*		
Tañjāvūr	Tiruppaḻuvvūr		*	
S. Ārcot	Vaḍugūr		*	
,,	Tirunāvalūr			*

District	Location of the Temple	Tirunāvuk-karasar	Tirujñāna-sambandar	Sundarar
	Uttama Cola (AD 969–985)			
Tañjāvūr	Tiruvārūr	*	*	*
S. Ārcot	Tiruveṇṇainallūr	*	*	*
Chingleput	Vridhāçalam	*	*	*
Tañjāvūr	Tirunāṛaiyur	*	*	
,,	Mayūram	*	*	
,,	Tirumaiyaççūr	*	*	
,,	Tirumaṇañçēri	*	*	
,,	Tiruturutti	*	*	
,,	Tirukkodikkāval	*	*	
,,	Āduturai	*	*	
,,	Konerirājapuram	*	*	
Chingleput	Tirumullaivāyal			*

The table shows categorically that the *tēvāram* trio lived during the period of the three successive Coḷa kings of the 10th century AD. The time-span covered by these kings adds up to 114 years. If an allowance of 10-15 years is made as the time required for the construction of the temples by Āditya I (both these visited and not visited by the *tēvāram* trio), the *tēvāram* trio will have to be accommodated within one hundred years, with an average of 33 years for each, especially if it is assumed that one followed the other. However, there is absolutely no evidence in favour of such an opinion, because, all the three *tēvāram* composers have sung on temples during the period of Āditya I; so also on a couple of temples during the regnal years of Parāntaka I and also of Uttama Coḷa, which means that each one of the trio should have lived for 70–80 years. Thus a most improbable conclusion becomes inevitable, although the date in the table suggests it.

This situation again rakes up the question already posed on a previous page (Critique 2)—Did the *tēvāram* trio actually visit the temples in order to dedicate the respective decad? A super-

ficial study of the table again *apparently* confirms the tradition that Tirunāvukkarasar and Tirujñānasambandar were contemporaries, having visited certain temples together. A closer examination, however, nullifies the traditional belief, as it is difficult to reconcile as to how they could have done this in the time of Āditya, Parāntaka, and again in that of Uttama Coḷa unless it is presumed that all the three lived for 70-80 years and that too contemporaneously.

Thus, based on the traditional account provided by the Periapurāṇam and the Tirumuraikkaṇḍappurāṇam in reference to the visits of the *tēvāram* trio to temples and, juxtaposing it with the historical data on some of these temples raises two propositions concerning the relative chronology of the trio.

(i) If Tirunāvukkarasar and Tirujñānasambandar had been contemporaries, they should have been so, through a gamut of nearly 80 years in the 10th century, as both of them have sung about the same temples during the regnal years of Āditya I, Parāntaka I and Uttama Coḷa. It may be seen that Sundarar also has joined them in reference to 15 temples in the same gamut of time. Therefore he should have also been coeval with the former two.

(ii) If successive gamuts of time are assumed for the trio in the order Tirunāvukkarasar, Tirujñānasambandar, Sundarar, the historical data is clearly against the proposition, again because all the three have sung about the temples built by the successive Coḷa kings of the 10th century.

It must not be forgotten that the historical data are reliable and valid, while the traditional data are undependable and useless for the study of chronology. The doubt raised in reference to the presumed visits of the *tēvāram* trio to the temples thus becomes amply confirmed. The cult of the *tēvāram* trio was *bhakti*, towards the propagation of which they leaned heavily on *purānic* lore. This cult was in contradistinction to that of the Śaivite temples which leaned equally heavily on the *tantric* lore. To both, however, Śiva was the supreme Lord. The *tēvārams* glorify him

through prayers and devotion, while the temples endeavoured to do the same through *āgama*-prescribed rituals. The mention of a specific temple/place by the *tēvāram* trio is purely incidental and their sole purpose appears to be merely to emphasize that Lord Śiva, irrespective of the town or temple occupied by Him, is the same all over, that He, the only supreme One is the very same every where. In order to convey this message it is not necessary for them to have actually visited all the temples. Just as they sang about the Lord residing in the Himālayan and Ceylon regions from a distance, they could have adopted a similar procedure in reference to several other temples as well. The rather nostalgic repetition of the same *purāṇic* incidents and episodes in *tēvāram* after *tēvāram*, temple/place, after temple/place, only emphasizes their attitude and outlook about Śiva—that he is that One Principle and the Only Principle, which, irrespective of its external manifestation and location, resides everywhere. Therefore the mention of a place/temple is incidental and inconsequential.

10. The tradition of Kṣētrayātra:

It is undoubtedly the Periapurāṇam that first speaks of the *tēvāram* trio as having visited the temples of Śiva located in diverse places. The author of the work, Śekkiḻār, is believed to have been a contemporary of a Coḻa king whose title was *Anapāya*, who, in turn, has been identified with Kulottuṅga II, AD 1133-1150 (Nilakanta Sastri, 1955) or with Kulottuṅga III, AD 1178-1816 (Śadasiva Pandarattar, 1967). Having become saturated with the pious urge of glorifying the religious lives of the 63 Śaiva devotees, he composed the *acta sanctorum*. As may be naturally expected, there has been a free use of story telling devices—exaggeration, twisting of probable factual material to the extent of obscuring the original character, invention or super-imposition of new ideas and concepts, all creation of his own imagination.

It should also be stated that the *tēvāram* trio had already been deified in the time of Rājarāja I, as witnessed by the installation of statues of the trio and by sponsoring their compositions to be recited in the temples. Here again the generality of

the *tēvārams* is emphasized by the fact that endowments for the purpose were initiated even in those temples that were not sung by them (Swamy, 1972 a).

In this connection it is necessary to recall the nature of the Śaivite religion during the time of Rājarāja I. It was a period when the Golaki school of Śaivism (*Śaiva, sensu strictu*) was finding popularity in the land under the royal patronage. This entrant-wave soon swept the Tamil̤ country largely by incorporating and digesting the indigenous Śaivite cults. It is as a result of this process that Aluḍaiyappil̤l̤ai was absorbed into the new fold after re-christening him as Tirujñānasambandar. Another instance of syncretism is provided by the encouragement given for the recital of the *tiruppadiyams* (*tēvārams*) in the temples, probably after having initiated the singers into some kind of *dikṣa* that was specific to the new cult. Thus the interaction between the indigenous and the entrant cults was one of mutuality and cordiality (Swamy, 1972 b). Such a process of synthesis continued into the successive centuries till the 13th.

It is in such an environment of amalgamation that Periapurāṇam was composed. This work *par excellence* is again an attempt towards providing a meeting point for the two streams of Śaivism. It is towards the achievement of this end that Śēkkil̤ār's genius portrayed the *tēvāram* trio as having actually visited the concerned temples in order to sing about them, thereby unifying the *bhakti* cult of the *tēvāram* trio with he *āgamic* cult of the temple.

The custom of visiting holy places at regular intervals is an old one in India, going backwards to Buddhistic times. The Jainas too followed the same tradition. Amongst the Hindus, the disciplines prescribed for the *Sannyasins* of certain orders, include touring around the holy places for most part of the year excepting the rainy season. In fact, this is the tradition that is living in our own day and therefore it is not as if Śēkkil̤ār had not known about it. It should also be noted that the way of life of the *tēvāram* trio was not that of householders; they lived the lives of the detached and emphasizing this aspect of the trio appears

to be one of the main intentions of their first biographer. Thus, Śēkkiḻār's imagination and ideals made him aptly super-impose the *Kṣētrayātra* concept on the lives of the *tēvāram* trio by utilizing their very compositions.

We may also note one particular point in reference to the decads themselves. Almost invariably there has been an eleventh verse besides the ten verses in each *padikam* of Tirujñānasambandar. This appendix is obviously an after-thought by some one other than the composer. Although the eleventh verse follows the same prosodic idiom of the preceding ten verses, its content, message and tenor with which it is conveyed are wholly different. It is in this verse that the name Jñānasambandar repeatedly occurs. On considerations such as these, the eleventh verse of the decad is deemed to be a later interpolation (Swamy, 1972 a). It is likely that this could have taken place during the absorption of indigenous cults by the Golaki school, at any rate, prior to the period of composition of the Periapurāṇam.

IV. CONSEQUENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The main conclusion of this study is that in contrast to the widely held contemporary opinion,* the *tēvāram* trio were not the contemporaries of the Pallava kings of the 7th century AD. All the temples that have been traditionally associated with Tirunāvukkarasar, Tirujñānasambandar and Sundarar are structures which came into existence through the benefaction of the Cōḻas of the 10th century AD, and therefore it is but appropriate that the age of *tēvāram* trio should coincide with this gamut of the Cōḻa dynasty. This is the period covered by the regnal years of Āditya I through Uttama Cōḻa.

(1) This conclusion stands as a serious negative evidence in studies bearing on the nature of the Śaivism in the Pallava country of the 7th century AD. All authors who have dealt with this topic have invariably been strongly influenced by the presumed coevity of the *tēvāram* trio (particularly Tirunāvukkarasar and Tirujñānasambandar) and the Pallava rulers from Mahēndravarman I

through Narasimhavarman II. In the light of what has been concluded in the present study, the religious history of the 7th century Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam will have to be re-written, totally eliminating the *tēvāram* trio from the arena.

The Pallavas who incidentally figure in the *tēvārams* and Periapurāṇam are therefore to be looked upon as legendary personae introduced by the authors in order to render the respective stories fulsome and *apparently* convincing. In other words, any other king of any other dynasty, real or fictitious, would have equally suited the purpose and context of these authors. Implying that such literary personae are established historical individuals and identifying them with this or that otherwise known king, is most unwarranted and such attempts result only in a highly distorted and therefore misguided history.

(2) The *tēvāram* trio were not the contemporaries of the 7th century Pāṇḍyas either. The presumed identity of the Pāṇḍya king who is said to have received Tirujñānasambandar with Māravarman Arikēsari has not been determined on convincing grounds. Even granting for a moment that it is satisfactory, there is no evidence whatsoever to presume that this king was a follower of Jainism. Either this king together with Maṅgaiyarkkaraśi and Kulaççiṟai are persons who lived during the 10th century or are fictitious characters evolved through the imagination of the authors.

(3) Consequent upon the placement of the *tēvāram* trio in the 10th century A.D. as contemporaries of the early kings of the Imperial Cōḻas, it becomes necessary to reconsider the dates of the remaining 60 nāyanmārs of the Śaiva hagiology. The *tēvārams* of Tirunāvukkarasar mention 10 of them; those of Tirujñānasambandar refer to 13 of whom five are seen in Tirunāvukkarasar's list. Presuming the author of Tiruttoṇḍattokai is Sundarar, there is a huge list of 62 *nāyanmārs* amongst whom are included not only the persons mentioned by Tirunāvukkarasar and Tirujñānasambandar, but also the latter two persons as well. If the *nāyanmārs* mentioned by the *tēvāram* trio are deemed to have been coeval as asserted by tradition, then the age of all the 63 *nāyanmārs* would fall in the 10th century itself.

It should, however, be noted that there are no infallible arguments that favour the attribution of the authorship of the Tiruttoṇḍattokai to Sundarar. Praising Śiva and glorifying His acts appear to be quite natural to Sundarar as they are to the remaining two of the trio. Their references to some devotees of Śiva in casual contexts is also understandable. But, it is doubtful if the glorification of the devotees, of Śiva (*Śivanaḍiyārs*) had become a stabilized institution in the 10th century A.D.

In the literary history of most languages in India, the original and elaborate places of writing chronologically precede their respective abridged versions. In the Kannaḍa language, for example, Harihara's Sivaganada ragalegalu was the original detailed work dealing with the lives of the Śaiva devotees and its abridged forms followed much later. There are no valid reasons to postulate the contrary in the Tamiḻ language. Tiruttoṇḍattokai and Tiruttoṇḍattiruvandādi are examples of abridgements of Śēkkiḻār's Tiruttoṇḍarppurāṇam (Periapurāṇam).

It should be realised that abridged versions of religious works have a specific purpose—to help one's concentration on a mediation theme and thus allow the mind to dwell in that state. In other words, they were a kind of practical guides for meditation, particularly for the lay devotee or for one who could not devote himself wholly for the pursuit of religion; they admirably suited the purpose of daily *pārāyana* (recitation). From considerations such as these, both the Tiruttoṇḍattokai and Tiruttoṇḍattiruvandādi clearly appear to be post-Periapurāṇam compositions. Such being the case, it is quite probable that the largest majority of the nearly 60 Śaiva devotees lived from the time of the *tēvāram* trio (10th century AD.) to the time of the composition of the Periapurāṇam by Śēkkiḻār (12th/13th centuries AD.).

(4) There is a deep-rooted belief amongst historians that there was a domination of Jainism and Buddhism in the 7th century Tamiḻ country and that the *tēvāram* trio and possibly the Vaiṣnavite *Āḻvars* were responsible for putting down these religions then and there, and in turn, raise the popularity of their own respective religions to domination. There are, however,

weighty evidences to point out that Jainism, though not Buddhism, continued to be a major religion in the Tamiḻ and Kannaḍa countries as late as the middle of the 12th century as witnessed in literature, architecture and epigraphic records. It is the 10th century Jainism and the residue of Buddhism that the *tēvāram* trio had to combat in the Tamiḻ country. It is as if a culmination of the Śaivite movement, that Periapurāṇam in the Tamiḻ country and Sivaganada ragalegalu in the Kannaḍa country were composed, thereby codifying and edifying the 63 *nāyanmārs*. As to why they fixed the number as 63, however, is another problem that has to be studied separately.

It does not appear that Harihara copied from Sēkkiḻār or *vice-versa*. Just as the names of some of the 63 *nāyanmārs* occur in the writings of the pre-Periapurānam period, in Kannaḍa too some of them figure in the *vaçanās* of the pre-Sivaganada regalegalu period. Thus some common matrix appears to have been the source for both. This source need not necessarily be a written book or composition. It could as well be the legends that were in popular currency during their time.

The religious movements in India have not known political barriers. During the early part of the medieval period, the Jainas maintained a kind of liaison between the Kannaḍa and Tamiḻ countries. Although much work is yet to be done in this connection, a couple of instances clearly indicate a similar liaison that existed in the Śaivite cults as well. The Kālamukha school from the Kannaḍa country had found placement, although temporarily, in some loci of the Tamiḻ country; interestingly, the movement of this school is intimately associated with the Rāṣṭrakūta-Coḻa battles (Swamy and Nanjundan, 1972). The mention of a pontiff from Kogali in some of the poems included in the VIIIth *tirumuṛai* clearly suggests the common connection of the author of these poems with the Kālamukha centre at Kogaḷi 500, which territory in the 10/11th centuries was constituted as parts of the modern Bellary and Harapanahalli districts (Swamy, 1974). Both in the Tamiḻ and Kannaḍa areas the *yogic* system and the philosophy of Gorakhnāth were quite well known (Nanjun-

dan, 1972). In both areas, again, the tantric-based *pratyabhigña* system had found currency (Krishna Rao, 1970; Swamy, 1972 d). Some of the minor Saivite cults—Kāpalika, Bhairava, (?) Kaula, and the like—appear to have been common during the period in the Tamiḻ, Telugu and Kannaḍa areas. Some social customs like the cutting off of one's head or limbs were shared by these regions.

Besides political factors like wars, the liaison appears to have become strengthened by merchant-guilds like the Maṇigrāmam, the Pattana-svāmis of Ayyavole and the Virabanajiṅgas, who travelled with their commodities of trade all over and between the linguistically different regions. The religion of the constituent members was either Jainism or Śaivism, the exact cult-patterns of which need further study.

(5) Although rarely, the students of history of Tamiḻ literature are faced with the question—Why is it that no commentaries have been written on the *tēvāram*? This indeed is a very important question particularly in view of the fact that old commentaries (often by more than one commentator) are available for the *divyaprabandams* of *āḻvars*, the canonical texts of the Śaiva-siddhānta, two of the books of the *tirumuṟai* series (the VIIIth and Xth Books), the Eṭṭuttokai and Paṭṭupāttu, the *Peruṅkāppiyam* like Cilappadikāram and Maṇimēkalai, and several classical works of literature including the texts on grammar and rhetoric.

This question has occurred to a few others in the past, and as far as I am aware, two explanations are offered. According to some scholars (I am not certain if this has appeared in print), the *tēvāram* represents the 'word of God' and therefore humans have no authority to comment on it. While this naive explanation deserves to be respected purely on sentimental grounds, it is difficult to understand how the *divyaprabhandams* also considered to be the 'word of God' have been commented upon. The second explanation — if it be an explanation — is an incident narrated by U. V. Swaminatha Aiyer in his autobiography. Tyagaraja Chetti-

yar, a brilliant scholar and a devout Śaivite, was often pressed to write a commentary on the *tēvārams.* He preferred to remain silent to the request. On one occasion when Swaminatha Aiyer and Tyagaraja Chettiyar were standing on the banks of the Kāveri, the former reminded the latter of the old request, to which the latter declared, 'If you press me about it, I shall jump into the river."

The incident is abruptly left at this point and no moral is drawn. Tyagaraja Chettiyar's reluctance could not have been because he lacked the background or ability, but his attitude and mental reservations could have been due to some other factors. Attention has been drawn on previous pages to the two distinct major cults of Śaivism, the *āgamic* and *bhakti* cults, that were in vogue during the period of the *tēvāram* trio, and how in subsequent periods of history serious attempts were repeatedly made to fuse the two into one. While such endeavours attained popularity at religious and ritualistic levels, there does not appear to be that degree of reconciliation at the philosophical level. The latter was especially so with the orthodox followers of the Śaiva-siddhānta tenets as expounded in the Siddhānta-sāstra texts. It is surprising that none of the commentators on the Siddhānta-sāstras refer to the *tēvāram* for the elaboration or elucidation of the tenets. In other words, they had no use for the element of *bhakti* in their philosophy, as it was an alien element to the *āgamic* tradition.

The legacy of writing commentaries on texts, religious as well as secular, is a comparatively old one in the Tamiḻ Nādu, having commenced in the 12th/13th centuries. It was maintained during the succeeding centuries by a galaxy of brilliant commentators. The secular literature drew its own coterie of commentaters, so also the canonical texts of Śaiva-siddhānta attracted another set. The element of *bhakti* associated with the concept of love and absolute surrender, being one of the basic tenets of Vaiṣhnavism, caught up both at practical and philosophical levels and received commentaries on the hymns of the *āḻvars.* The *tēvāram,* however, remained in a rather isolated position at the theoretical level as its intrinsic content could not be successfully amalgamated with

the Śaiva-siddhānta system of thought. Such a situation is by no means exclusive to this system alone. The *vācana* literature of the Vīra-śaivas and the *dāsa* literature of the Vaiṣṇavas in the Kannaḍa language form their own encystments at the respective philosophical levels, in spite of the popularity they continue to enjoy at the practical levels (Krishna Rao, 1970). It is interesting to note that excepting the category called the *bedagina vacana* of *tantric yogic* import, the remainder of *vacana* literature and *dasa* literature have remained without commentaries.

Attempts to find the germs of the Śaiva-siddhānta philosophy in the *tēvārams* are all of recent origin in the 20th century. To what extent such endeavours would be successful cannot be assessed at present. Historical retrospective, however, clearly establishes the independent origins and parallel development of the *bhakti* and Śaiva-siddhānta movements, the former being chronologically earlier.

(6) A question has been raised on a previous page as to why the *tēvāram* trio failed to sing about the Pallava temples of the 7th century AD. After having had a rule by this dynasty for a continuous period of nearly 250 years, the kingdom suffered heavily on account of the military inroads of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and the Coḷas from the time of Dantivarman. His period marks the onset of decadence of the Pallava dynasty which became practically extinct by the end of the 9th century (Mahalingam, 1969). The indigenous religious life of Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam during the period of decadence cannot be expected to have flourished with continued vigour, particularly in view of a new wave of Śaivism *(kālamukha)* that had been introduced by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa invaders (Swamy and Nanjundan, 1972). The rituals in and the working of the Pallava temples should have become degenerate and the people's faith turned away from the old institutions. By the time the *tēvāram* trio appeared in the 10th century AD, the Pallava temples had almost completely lost their once popular image and a large number of them had been neglected and rendered useless. Thus the reason for the *tēvāram* trio for not having offered the decads to the Pallava-founded temples appears to be due to the chronological lag.

(7) There has been a growing trend in the methodology of historical research in the Tamil Nādu to draw freely from literary works in the Tamil language. Intrinsically there is nothing wrong in the method, provided the dates of the concerned texts are known with at least — fair degree of accuracy and certainty. It is a pity that the largest number of texts available in the literature of the Tamil language are yet undated or have been dated on a series of dogmatic assumptions and assertions. Likewise, the presumed age (7th century AD) of the *tēvāram* trio has been taken for granted as a reliable thumb-rule to determine the dates of some of the early Pāṇḍya Pallava or Cola kings. The chronologies and genealogies reconstructed in this manner are in turn used as an equally reliable time-measure to assess the period of certain other events in the fields of culture, arts, religion, etc. Therefore several aspects of the history of the Tamil Nādu are in need of fresh and objective approaches with due respect for chronology. Then alone can one expect to obtain a factual history free from prejudiees and anachronisms.

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CASTE AND MARRIAGE SYSTEMS OF THE TRIBALS OF LAKSHADWEEP

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The literal meaning of Lakshadweep, the smallest Union Territory in the country, is one lakh islands. But it comprises only 22 islands and 5 attached islets with a total are of 32 sq. km. These tiny lush coral islands encircled by the mighty Arabian sea are only 3 to 5 metres above sea level. They are situated at 200 to 400 km. off the Kēraḷa coast and at 10 to 330 km. from one another. Only ten of them are inhabited. From north to south they are Chetlat, Bitra, Kiltan, Kadmat, Amini, Androth, Kavaratti, Agatti, Kalpeni and Minicoy.

Tourists' Resorts

With vast and varied spectrum of tourists' attraction Lakshadweep is potentially one of the most interesting, exciting and beautiful regions of the country. It has proved a tourist's paradise due to its romantic panorama. The evergreen feathery coconut groves, crystal clear blue water of the extensive lagoons suitable for all kinds of acquatic sports and the idyllic combination of sun, sea, surf-washed sand and fresh air of these colourful and distinctive islands of strategic importance have now acquired and unique position in the tourism map of the world.

People

The population of this territory is only 31,980 according to 1971 census. It recorded a decennial growth of 31.5% between 1961 and 71. The density of population is 994 per sq. km., the third in rank in the country. The entire inhabitants are Muslims classified as scheduled tribes. Mostly, they belong to the Shafi school of the Sunni sect. The Wahabis and Ahmediyas constitute a minority. The Wahabis have considerable following in Minicoy

and Agatti islands. They possess separate mosques in these islands. Ahmediyas have following only in Kalpeni island. Minicoy is an exception in every respect while the customs, culture and mode of life of the people in the other islands are more or less the same.

Language

Malayāḷam and Mahl are the mother tongues of the inhabitants of these islands. The people in all the islands except Minicoy speak Malayāḷam with local variations from island to island. But it is different from the Malayāḷam spoken in Kēraḷa. The people of this territory lived in isolation for many centuries. Hence they were not influenced by the new developments which effected changes in the old Malayāḷam in Kēraḷa. A great deal of original Tamiḻ and many Arabic words are in common use in these islands. The Malayāḷam spoken in the five northern islands was influenced by Kannaḍa language because of their connections as part of the former South Canara District, while the other islands were part of former Malabār District both under the erstwhile Madras State till 1956. The inhabitants of Minicoy speak "Divehi" popularly known as 'Mahl', a mixture of Urdu and Sinhalese. Mahl has its own script 'Divehi Thana'. Like Arabic and Urdu, Mahl is written from right to left.

Origin

The people are drawn from two distinct racial stocks. Island tradition points out to their Hindu origin. Many of their house names also support this view. But the inhabitants of Minicoy, the southern-most islands are of Maldivian stock, unlike other islanders who are of the same ethnic stock as those on the Malabār coast.

According to one legend, Bhāskara Ravi Varma, the last Chēraman Perumaḷ who ruled over Kēraḷa embraced Islam and left for Mecca. An expedition set out in search of him at the instance of the Hindu rulers of Kēraḷa. The members of the expedition became settlers in the islands as a result of ship wreck. They were converted into Islam by the Arab saint

Ubaidulla in the 14th century. It is worth mentioning that the first person who embraced Islam was a women of 'Kadukketh' house in Ameni island despite strong opposition from the entire islanders. This woman took the Islam's name of Hamidat Bibi and later married the saint. The couple then lived at Pattakkal house constructed for them in Androth by the people of that island. The grave of Ubaidulla in this island is held in high esteem.

Caste System

The inhabitants of these islands observe caste system. The people in all the islands exeept Minicoy are divided into three castes. They are Koyas, Malmis and Melacheris. Koya is the highest caste. The memberr of this caste usually use the title of Koya with their names. They were landlords and owners of most of the country crafts "oḍams'. tlll recently. Some of the Malmis were also landlords but only on a smaller scale than the Koyas. They are mostly sailors and fishermen. Melacheris belong to the lowest caste, They are petty tenants, coconut tree climbers, barbers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths and mostly servants of the Koyas. They form nearly 60% of the population in the Malayāḷam speaking islands.

The Koyas are generally the leisured class. Only a few of them are engaged in fishing and cultivation. The Koyas of Ameni, Androth, Kavaratti and Kalpeni claim as the first settlers who descended from "Nambudiri" and other high caste Hindus of the Malabār coast. These four islands are therefore, regarded as the "Taraward" islands.

The Koyas of Androth, the largest island due west of Calicut follow a profession of learning and piety, tour extensively in South India and some foreign countries and earn good sums on that account. The pride themselves on their theological education in which they acclaim superior to the Muslims of the West Coast.

Mēlacheris are considered to be the descendants of "Thiyya" and other low castes. They were not allowed to wear chappals,

shorts or bunyan or to use umbrella. The people of the upper classes mainly the Koyas wanted to enforce these distinctions more strictly while Mēlacheris demanded greater freedom. Strife between them often took place. Intercaste marriage is not permitted.

These are four castes in Minicoy. Manikfan is the highest caste. They were managing the internal affairs of the island till recently. Thacrufans are mariners with social status. Thackrus are also sailors and khalasis, but socially inferior to Thackrufans. Raveris, the lowest caste, are the labour class, mostly tree climbers and tappers. The women of Manikfan, Thackrufan, Thackru and Raveri are known by the caste names of Monikka, Bifan, Bibi and Kambilo respectively. Inter-caste marriage is not usually permitted. But there is no objection for a male belonging to a higher caste in marrying a female from a lower caste. The children of such couples take the caste of the father. But a male member of a low caste is never allowed to marry a woman from a high caste.

The people of Minicoy are generally good seamen and fishermen. Both men and women of this island are progressive, hardworking and well disciplined from time immemorial.

The people in all the islands are intensely religious. In almost all the islands there are a number of mosques, big and small, including the main mosques of Jamath, Moideen and Ujra. But there is no Ujra mosque in Minicoy. The Juma mosque is generally the largest where the 'Id' Congregation meets. The other two mosques are mainly intended for performance of 'Rathib' peculiar to these islands with the exception of Minicoy. The people are generally honest and law-abiding even though they were illiterate, ignorant and superstitious for many centuries in the past, because of is olation andlack of facilities for progress. In olden days they did not give any attention for the education of children except for the regular classes conducted in Madras to teach them reading and recitation of 'Koran' without knowing its meaning.

Ornaments

Women are lavish in the use of ornaments. A variety of jewellery are found in all the islands except Minicoy where they are frugal in wearing ornaments. Certain traditional restrictions exist in the use of jewellery among women of the different castes, In all the islands women of Koya and Malmi castes wear gold ornaments while Melacheri women use only silver ornaments. In Minicoy, ear-rings and ear-drops made of gold are used by Monikka, the women of the highest caste. Beefans are also permitted to wear golden ear rings but not golden drops. Bibis use ear rings made of silver. Kambilos, the women of the lowest caste, are permitted to use only ear-rings made of copper or thick black string. These restrictions are gradually fading out.

Marriage

The traditional customs connected with Nikkah and marriage are the same in all the islands except Minicoy. Child marriage, polygamy and frequent divorce are common in these islands. The boys are generally married between the age of 16 and 20 and girls between 10 and 13. The first marriage is arranged for a boy by the parents of both the parties and subsequent marriages by himself. A suitable date is chosen by the guardian for Nikkah and marriage. Nikkah usually precedes marriage festivities. Both the ceremonies rarely take place consecutively. The Nikkah ceremony is generally arranged at the mosque or the bride's residence in the presence of the Khazi. The relatives and friends of the couple are invited for the function. The Khazi administers the oath which is repeated by the bridegroom in the presence of at least two witnesses. The bride is represented by her father. Before the oath is administered, the Khazi ascertains from him whether the consent of the bride was taken for the alliance. In case of any doubt the Khazi can summon the girl and ascertain her consent in person. Nikkah is followed by a grand feast. But the actual marriage ceremony takes place after a few weeks, months or sometimes, years after Nikkah. It is usually performed at the bride's house, if the girl belongs to a high caste and in the mosque if she is a Melacheri. The customary dowry by

the husband known as Mahr to the wife is at the rate of Rs. 22 or Rs. 30/- for Koya, Rs. 15 or Rs. 12/- for Malmi and Rs. 3 to 6 for Melacheri. A little difference is noticed in the amount of Mahr from island to island.

In the morning of the marriage day the bridegroom sits in his house surrounded by a group of singers. They sing "kettu-pattu" i. e. songs for marriage for about 2 hours. At this time a similar function takes place in the bride's residence also. Here the singers are women. After some time a party consisting of the bride's father, relatives and friends accompanied by a group of singers and folk dancers goes to the boy's house in order to bring him ceremoniously for the marriage. This procession is known as "Duyyappalaye Thedippokal", which means going in search of the bridegroom. On arrival a warm reception is accorded to the party. The guests are ushered inside the specially erected pandal. Light refreshments are served to them. The bridegroom is then brought to the centre of the pandal and seated on a decorated stool or chair. One of the singers of his party then asks loudly for permission to bring the "ossan" (barber) for a clean shave for the boy. The question is repeated thrice. One of the representatives of the audience gives permission. The family 'ossan' is then called for. A new 'Dhoti' and a few coins are given to the barber by the boy. The bridegroom is then shaved cleanly. The shaving process continues for about one hour. Singing takes place during this time. After bath, the boy who is dressed ceremoniously for the occasion, is conducted to the bride's house in a colourful procession with singing and folk dances like 'Kolkali' and 'Parchakkali'. But Melacheris are allowed to sing songs or to arrange dances only in the premises of their houses and not on the way. "Kattupattu" "Oppana" which is a musical session by separate groups of men and women are essential items of the marriage. The bride's house is generally decorated beautifully to suit the occasion.

When the procession arrives near the bride's house, the party is received with honour by the people of the bride. Rose water and raw rice are sprinkled on them. When the bridegroom first

enters the bride's house, he gives an amount according to his capacity to the guardian of the bride. The groom and his party are seated in the decorated pandal specially erected for the marriage.

The Nikkah ceremony is performed first, if it has not taken place earlier. Music and dancing are resumed. Then the party settles down for a grand feast. After the feast the bridegroom is taken back to his house in a procession.

The marriage festivities continue like this for 3 to 7 days. Singing and dancing are essential on all the days. A total of eight feasts are arranged during these days. But feasting is generally confined now-a-days to relatives and youngsters who act as companions unlike in olden days. On the 3rd or 7th day, the last day of the celebrations the bridegroom sleeps in the bride's house for the night. A large-scale feast, sometimes to the entire people of the island is arranged to mark this function, known as 'Veedukoodal'. The bridegroom is received by the brother-in-law who washes his feet, just before entry into the house. The bridegroom meets his bride for the first time on the night of 'Veedukoodal'.

After the marriage the couple continue to live in their own houses. According to tradition the husband goes to the wife's house each night, sleeps there and returns to his own house in the morning after taking a cup of black tea or "kañji". The children live with their mother. They are governed by 'Marumakkathāyam' i.e. succession in the female line. "Tarawad" or ancestral property known as "Velliyarcha" (Friday) property is inherited only by women. "Thinkalarcha swath" (Monday property) or self-acquired property can be spent according to the wish of the earner or divided to children according to Mohammadan law. Self-acquired property is known as "Belarcha" property (literally Thursday property) in the northern five islands.

The entire expenses connected with the marriage are usually incurred by the bride's people. Rich families spend a substantial amount for marriage feasts. In some islands it is customary to

give a part of the expenditure varying from Rs. 100/- to Rs. 1000 to the bride's people by the bridegroom. But in some other islands this customary payment is made only after one year of the marriage. This is paid by co-operative borrowing known as 'Bir'. It is collected from relatives and friends either in cash or kind on the condition of repayment to them, free of interest under similar circumstance.

Divorce

Divorce is quite common. If the husband wants to divorce he has to forfeit all that he gave to the wife. If it is the other way, he will get back all that he had given to her including Mahr, clothes and jewellery. There are very few men or women who have not married or divorced several times. Marriage, divorce and remarriage are a regular feature in these islands with the exception of Minicoy.

Minicoy is unique in this respect. Minicoyites are monogamous. Child marriage is not permitted. Divorce is quite uncommon. The Minicoy girls have the right to choose their husbands. Their communal system affords a good deal of scope for young men and women for courting prior to wedding resulting in love-marriages. Wedding ceremony is comparatively simple. Unlike in other islands, the bridegroom has to incur all the expenses connected with marriage and reception.

On the night prior to the Nikkah, the bridegroom and the bride are summoned to the Khatib's house. The Khatib asks the bride whether she is prepared to marry the bridegroom and the former announces her willingness for a fixed amount as Mehr. Then they sign the marriage register kept by the Khatib. The Nikkah takes place the next day after evening prayer. The oath is rendered by the Khatib to the bridegroom, the former holding the latter's hand.

The wedding clothes for the bride have to be sent to her house by the groom on a fixed day prior to the marriage. In addition to the clothes another presentation consisting of two beds,

two bed sheets, six big pillows, three small pillows, a pair of door curtains, cosmetics and two sets of night dress one each for the bridegroom and the bride has also to be sent by him.

One or two days prior to the marriage a few friends of the bridegroom come to the bride's house to string the curtains to the door of the bride's room. The guests are entertained to tea. After the curtains are hung they are shoved out of the house and water is poured on their heads by women for making fun of them.

A peculiar feature of their custom is the absence of the role of parents at the marriage ceremony which is performed by the Khatib. The bridegroom is accompanied by a few friends and the bride by two or three elderly women. The ceremony is followed by a small feast or tea party. Then the people disperse and the groom returns to his house. Afterwards the bride sends a messenger to bring the bridegroom to her house. The groom becomes a member of the bride's house since then.

In Minicoy the Mehr varies according to the caste. The customary rate is Rs. 100/- for Manikfan, Rs. 50/- for Thackrufan, Rs. 15/- for Thackru and Rs. 5/- for Raveri. But there is no objection in giving higher amounts according to the capacity of the groom.

Apart from Mehr the husband has to make certain customary contribution to the wife towards maintenance, in all these islands. It is four bags of rice and 2 complete set of dress per year. But in Minicoy the annual contribution was not less than Rs. 75/- in the case of Thackru and Raveri, Rs. 150 for Thackrufan and Rs. 300 for Manikfan besides 5 sets of dress according to the old rate. The amount has subsequently been increased many times in view of the high price of essential commodities. All expenses of the children are also borne by the father in this island.

In all the islands except Minicoy on the birth of a child, the father and his relatives are first informed of the event. After bath, 'bank' is rendered to the baby by an elderly person. The father has to give his wife nearly one bag of rice, 15 bottles of coconut

oil and 40 fowls on the birth of the first child. This is collected on 'Bir' system. The child is named on the 7th day by the father or grandfather without any ceremony or feast. The child's head is first shaved on the 14th day. This ceremony is celebrated on a grand scale at the expense of the father. Circumcision is usually carried out between the of 6 and 10. Some people especially the poor postpone it till the age of 15. Circumcision is performed by the "Ossan", when singing and dancing take place. Festivities including feasts to relatives and friends for 3 to 7 days are essential for this ceremony. In the case of girls, the ear boring ceremony is celebrated between the age of 5 and 10. It is performed by a goldsmith or one of the women with gaiety and enthusiasm.

In Minicoy on the date of birth of a child, the father sends to his wife a small bed with curtains, pillows, necessary dress, cosmetics etc. for the baby. If it is the first birth, beaten rice (Aval) and coconut are sent to the houses of the relatives on the date of delivery itself. Immediately after birth the baby is bathed and "bank" rendered to it. The head of the baby is shaved only after 20 days. The entire expenses connected with this function known as "Bobylen" are mainly met by the father.

In Minicoy circumcision is arranged between the age of 5 and 8. Friends and relatives are invited. Circumcision is carried out in the most hygeinic way by experts. The person who carries out circumcision is paid from Rs. 35/- to Rs. 60/- according to the status and capacity of the family. Elaborate fesvivities including singing, dancing and feasting follow the function for about a week.

The ear boring ceremony of girls takes place between the age of 8 and 9 in this island. It is usually performed by a woman generally known as "Kamphaithorufamiha" who is a family friend well experienced in ear boring. Sometimes a present in the form of cloth or money is paid to her. According to tradition there are no hard and fast rules regarding this payment. A few friends and relatives are invited for the ceremony. In

certain cases singing and dancing are also arranged. The ceremony ends with a simple tea party.

Changing face

Constitution of these long neglected islands into a Union Territory in 1956 was a glittering ray of hope for progress and prosperity. Since then due to implementation of massive development programmes, the territory has recorded remarkable progress in all the spheres of economy especially in the fields of education, fishing, agriculture, land reforms, co-operation, electrification, public health, transport and communication as a result of which great changes are taking place in the life and culture of the people of these islands.

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HEROES OR GODS IN TAMIL SAṄGAM

M. SUNDAR RAJ

Are we sure that many of the pieces in the Pura-nānūṟu (புறநானூறு), which are now read as being purely historical and secular in nature do not carry a deeper religious significance? It may be thought that there can be no doubt about the answer, but it would be worthwhile taking a fresh look.

Let us take a small selection of about 55 pieces which refer to the so-called Seven Last Vaḷḷals, or Minor Chieftains, of the Saṅgam age (கடையேழு வள்ளல்).

I. Adiyamān Nedumān Añji. (அதியமான் நெடுமான் அஞ்சி)

Of these chieftains Adiyamān is the one who receives the largest attention, some 17 poems (87–108) being about him alone·

He is described (100) as holding up the sharp (88) spear (வேல்) in his hand, with the warriors' anklets (கழல்) on his feet, and wearing the vetchi (வெட்சி) and veṅgai (வேங்கை) garlands. He has curly black flowing hair, fiery eyes and wounds on his body. We have also a description (103) of the musicians and devotees who go to him. The women come with drums and musical instruments, slung from their shoulders and hanging on two sides (as from Kāvaḍi, காவடி). They hold in their hands their begging-bowls (மண்டை). Adiyamān is said to fill their bowls (give them food and drink) at all times, regardless of whether there is famine or plenty in the land. In 104, his enemies are not to be misled by his child-like (mild) appearance, for in spite of his appearance he could be a terror in the battle-field. The Poetess Avvaiyār is like a child to him for he showers on her his grace (அருள்) like a father (92). His followers are like children to him, and he is gentle with them and fierce to his enemies (94). Sometimes he does not grant requests quickly (101), but it is certain he will meet them sooner or later. Out of compassion for the suffering in wars, he often hesitates to fight, though there is no one equal to him in bravery (90).

It is useless to expect success by confronting him on the battle-field (88), which he is always ready to enter (89). A comparison is made (95) between the state and condition of his troops and their equipment, and those of Thoṇḍaimān (தொண்டைமான்). The latter are well-fed and possess beautiful weapons; Añji's people, however, with whom he shares his food are starved and ill-fed, but his Vēl (வேல்) is sharp and pointed. People are advised not to stand against him, but to surrender and pay his dues (97). The deeds of his fore-fathers are recounted (99). They offered sacrificial oblations to the Dēvas and they brought to earth, the rare and difficult-to-obtain sugar-cane (கரும்பு) from the heavens; they established the wheel (ஆழி) (this might mean Rule or Dharma) in the land. So likewise (ஒப்ப) are Añji's deeds.

An extra ordinary event is related in 91, where he is said to have given the life-giving (immortal) fruit, (நெல்லி) to the poetess, Avvaiyār. He is described as having the white crescent moon on his tuft, and the blue-stone string on his throat (like Śiva). His people drink and create an uproar (ஆர்கலிநறவின்) (even as the followers of Śiva). (The poem is given in Appendix).

Añji's little son, who is referred to in 100, is described in greater detail in 96 and 102. Pogeṭṭezhini (பொருட்டெழினி) is his son, and the most remarkable things about him are his beauty with which he destroys (attracts) damsels, and his warlike qualities which destroy his enemies (96). He is available to support his father's rule, as the axle base supports the axle (102).

(I do not comment upon poems 87 and 93, even though their mythological and ritual contents are of very great interest. It will require a separate paper to examine their significance, and, in any case, their substance is not of immediate relevance here).

II. Pāri. (பாரி)

There are 16 poems sung about Pāri (பாரி) by Kapilar, which are numbered 105–120 in the collection (Puṟa-nānūṟu by A. Doraiswami, Kazhagam, Madras, 1947).

Poems Nos. 109, 110 and 111 are interesting in that there it is said that Pāri will not submit to people who came to him in arms, but only to songsters, dancers etc. Poem No. 109 which is the most characteristic is given in Appendix. This, as will be readily appreciated, sounds very much like the devotional "marg" of the Bhakthi cults. It is also (109) that Pāri can well live on bamboo-rice, jack-fruits, roots and honey, the traditional sattvic food of Sanyāsis and Yogis, the first of whom is, of course, Śiva. It is significant also that Pāri's abode is said to be on a mountain which reaches up to the firmament.

Poem No. 106 is also in the Bhakthi mode, in that it compares Pāri to God, and says that even as the latter entertains with equal warmth the good and bad amongst his followers, symbolised by the எருக்கண்பூ (which, incidentally, is the favourite flower of Śiva) so also, Pāri will not discriminate against the stupid, rather than on the cowardly which would normally be deemed as the relevant degrading characteristics of a warrior. Note also the deliberate application of the word கடவன் (bound by duty) to Pāri in the last line, contrasting with கடவுள் in line 3.

It is said that he would give bits of "paṛambu" to those who go to him. If he has no more of this to give, and if his devotees ask for him, he himself would go to them (106, 108, 110, 111, etc.), and he will also confer on them Aṛam (அறம்), Dharma or Merit. Paṛambu is the name of his land, but the etymology of the word is not clear. It is apparently derived from the root "paṛam" (பறம்) in the same way as "paṛanthalai" (பறந்தலை) meaning the graveyard, which, in Saivitism, is the haunting ground of the giver of Aṛam (Knowledge) that is Śiva. The description of his abode and personality abound in such matters which are associated with Śiva, as koḷḷi (கொள்ளி), or faggots used in the burning ghat, sandal wood (ஆரம்) and veṅgai flowers (favourites with Śiva) are all referred to (106) and he said to give not only Aram (அரம்), but even himself (108). There are said to be beautiful waterfalls (அருவி) in Pāri's land, and blue lotus in his rivers (105), which are always full, whether there is rainfall or not. There is nothing of history or warfare in these

matters, and one has even the feeling that Pāri is another name for Śiva as known in later times.

On the other hand, the moaning dirges over the death of Pāri and the sad fate that has over-taken his land and his daughters (112 to 120) have, on first reading, some realistic touch, and might well refer to historical facts. If so, it may appear difficult to reconcile such elements with the theory of a deified Pāri. There is, however, the possibility that these apparent historical events (113 to 120) are really symbolic, and that there is a covert Śaivite mythology which is hidden in them. In any case the events described have little historical value, and the basic event related, even if factual, is very simple.

III. **Kāri.** (மலையமான் திருமுடிக்காரி)

Kāri is invariably referred to as a hill-man "மலையன்" a term which, in Tamil religious literature, is specially applicable to Śiva and his various forms. It is possible, therefore, that the epithet "of the holy tuft" (திருமுடி), often applied to Kāri, and generally considered to refer to his royal status, could well refre to the unruly and holy tuft of Shiva.

In poem No. 122 (Appendix), which is about Kāri, each one of the lines requires careful examination to bring out the deeper meaning of what on the face of it appears to be plain matter-of-fact descriptions. It is said that neither the sea nor enemies can take his land (line 1). Reading this together with (lines 2-3) the statement that it belongs to "priests" (அந்தணர்), it could only mean that it is holy land. Kāri himself is said to wear the warrior's anklet, and to be well-versed in the (warriors') dance (line 2). The gifts that three kings (வேந்தர்), which is a term applied in religious literature to the three Gods (அரி, அரன், அயன்), bring to him singing his praises (lines 4-7) belong to his devotees. His wife who is seated (?) on his shoulder, and is said to speak sweetly, is compared to the star Arundhati (Ārdra Bāhu) (which is, in mythology, on the right arm of Śiva) (lines 8-9). He has nothing which can be called his own except his wife (line 10); he is so poor and yet so wealthy and proud (line 11).

It is difficult to find a satisfactory interpretation for poem No. 121. Plainly the poet wants the patron, Kāri, to discriminate in favour of poets while bestowing his gifts, but the spirit of the poem is contradictory to the general sentiment of praise for universal liberality of rulers. If, however, the poet's intention is to address the divine, not only does the reference to people, "coming from all four directions", but also the complaint about the indiscriminate generosity of the giver, take meaning. The appeal that the poets, that is, the "knowers" (புலவர்) (here one well-equipped with knowledge) be specially favoured becomes understandable, and a hint of sectarianism can even be felt in the poem, as if preference should be given to "the believers" or "the true devotees".

In poem No. 123, Kāri is said to be unlike other chieftains whose generosity arises under the influence of drink, and his gifts are bestowed from a free and bountiful heart. A similar sentiment appears in piece No. 124, where the seeker is told that it is not necessary to observe omens and auspicious time for seeking Kāri's aid. Even harsh words will not deprive the supplicant of his generosity. Here the "hill-man" is said to reside in high mountains, where water-falls (அருவி) abound.

The poet, in 125, (reproduced in Appendix), says that to him is attributable both the success of the victors who has his support, and the defeat of the vanquished, who do not have. Pāri here is referred to as "The One" (ஒரு நீயாயினை). It is interesting also to note that Kāri is called "வஸ்வேல்" (powerful spear, it may also refer to Śiva's *trisul*), a term specially reserved for Ori. Kāri is described as "wearing anklets and coming with beautiful measured steps" (that is dancing), and the deliberate use of the words "சேவடி", "தாள்வாழ்" etc., are very significant. In lines 1 to 4 of this poem we find the poets eating fatty meat and drinking toddy in vessels called "மண்டை", or skull, which is a favourite vessel of Śiva. Kāri is also said to drink the "கள்" (toddy).

I reproduce poem No. 126 also in the Appendix as it is equally interesting, for, some of the landscape descriptions are not only very beautiful poetry, but are also very significant for our

purpose. Lines 6 to 8 may be translated as "O Lord of Muḷḷūr, in whose beautiful forests the night comes to rest (so dark and dense are the trees) and the water-falls sound like drums beating, etc.". We may here speculate on the word "முள்ளூர்" as perhaps describing a thorny land (as would be Śiva's territory), or as referring to his weapon, the pointed *Trisul,* These words could well fit Śiva, and then the previous line (4) would suggest that the qualities of Śiva are now being assigned to Kāri, a mythical descent from the God being assigned to him. In line 11, the poet is described as "புலனழுக்கற்ற அந்தணாளன்" (= புலன் அழுக்கற்ற அந்தணாளன்). Here " லன் " obviously refers not only to mere knowledge but also to the senses, and the poet is said to be, therefore, free from the control of the senses, a quality more to be expected in a Śaiva saint, than a courtier flattering a chieftain.

IV. Āy. (வேள் ஆய் அண்டிரன்)

Poem 128 (reproduced in Appendix) purports to describe the land of Āy. "Right in the meeting place (மன்றம்) of his city which is on the Podiyil (hill), there is a big Jackfruit tree where monkeys dwell. From its branches are suspended drums hung by people who come to receive his gifts, and these drums are mistaken for the jack-fruit, and so are beaten, (thus the drum-beat is continuously heard in his land). This in turn makes the swan rise up and gives its call. In the midst of this, Ay dances wearing the warrior's anklets (leg ornament) (கழல்). This city, it is said, cannot be reached by kings and chieftains, but can be reached only by one (her, விறலி) who goes there to dance". Quite obviously the last lines refer to Pārvathi, and the whole verse is a description of Śiva and His Abode. It may be recalled that in Hindu Mythology, the hill "Podiyil" acts as a counter-weight to the Himalayas where Śiva is seated, and by implication it is also Śiva's abode. The commentator finds an etymology for "அண்டிரன்" (Aṇḍiran) in "ஆந்திரன்" (Āndhiran) that is, a man from "Andhradēsa". But perhaps a better derivation would be from "ஆண்டி" (Āṇḍi), a common appellation for Śiva. "ஆண்டு" (Āṇdu) meaning "to take refuge" could, if acceptable, also provides a better etymology (ஆண்டு+இரன் or one who give refuge).

In verse 127, Āy is said to have given away everything to his followers, thus making his country very poor, unlik the lands of those who enjoy without sharing their food with others.

The three poems, 129 to 131, describe Āy's dress, habits, etc. He is drunk and dances the Kuravai dance, near the Vēṅgai tree (Śiva's favourite), on a hill near the small huts of poor hunters (129), where there are plenty of jack-fruit trees, and elephants (129). He wears a garland made ef shining beads (விளங்குமணி Viḷaṅgumaṇi). (விளங்கு Viḷaṅgu) means also "to know", and the beads could well refer to the Rudrāksha, the bead of knowledge (130). The garland is also said to be of flowers from the "வரை" tree (a kind of gamboge tree) (131). There are plenty of elephants on this hill of Āy, which is so high as to reach to the clouds (131).

Poem No. 132 (reproduced in Appendix) is a very significant one. It says, "I thought of him (that is, I came to him in my difficulties) last, whom I should have thought of (that is, come to) first. May I suffer for this shortcoming! May my tongue be cut (for praising others and forgetting him)! As I have listened to others being praised and not him, may my ears become choked (plugged) like old disused wells! Here in his land lives deer, feasting on fragrant grass, in the midst of streams in which the blue water-lily blooms, and in the shade of fragrant trees, with his female deer. This is the hill which looks northward to the Himālayas, and if these two were not there, the whole world will be destroyed". That there is a veiled reference to Śiva in "the deer" will be quite easily seen.

"To see Āy, you must go to him, singing and dancing the peacock dance" (133). "He gives gifts freely, and not like a merchant, expecting a return in the next birth" (134).

Poem 135 describes his abode, and the poet's longing for him. Tigers and elephants abound in his forest, and the weary path to his abode is narrow and passes through mountain cliffs. The poet has come alone (his wife is coming behind) not for gifts, but to see one who is the subject of so much praise, and who is sought

by so many. Another poet, however, in the next poem (136), describes his poverty and wants in the most pitiable terms and begs for, sustenance. His description of the difficulties in the approach to Āy's abode is, however, the same.

V. **Ori.** (வல்விலோரி)

A very interesting poem No. 152 is dedicated to Ori, of the mighty arrow. A single arrow of his is said to have pierced in turn five animals, viz., an elephant, a tiger, a deer, a pig and a big lizard. The first three it will be noticed are animals whose skin serve Śiva in various ways; the pig and lizard are favourites of the Kuṛavars amongst whom He is said to live. This arrow is said to be an excellent and famous one belonging to a great hunter, who hunts not for profit by trade, being himself very rich. (Would it be too daring to treat this myth of five animals as a veiled reference to the five letters, the Pañchākshara, arranged in a line as by an arrow). His broad chest is smeared with sandal paste, and he is the lord of the hills which has plenty of fruits and water-falls. The poet and his female companion sing to him on the lute (*யாழ்*) with drums and cymbals. Calling on him by his name, which is "Ko" (*கோ*) (God-King) (compare the call of "GOVINDA" by Vaiṣnavite pilgrims to-day) they go daily to him who has no peer as hunter. They receive plenty of rich meaty venison food, and drinks, as also gifts of neck-wear made of gold and beads. He is the lord of high mountains called Kolli (*கொல்லி*), which is full of caves and caverns (152). Similar details of these matters are to be found further in poem No. 153. Here we find among other things the blue lotus in Ori's land.

VI. **Pēkan.** (வையாவிக்கோப்பெரும்பேகன்)

Pēkan (*பேகன்*) is said (141) to give valuable gifts (142), and appease the hunger of the music troupes out of pure compassion, and not for the sake of recompense in the next birth. Here is mentioned the famous incident of Pēkan having placed a covering over the peacock. The word used is "paḍām" (*படாம்*) which means both "a simple covering" (*சீலை*), but connects also "a large banner". The line (11) which reads as:

"படா அமைஞ்ஞைக கீத்தரவங்கோ"

and on re-casting as "படாம்மஞ்ஞைக்கு ஈத்தவெங்கோ", is translated as "he who gave the covering to the peacock". It may also, however, be rendered as "he who gave shelter to the peacock", or more freely as "he who took the peacock under (or on) his banner", all of which would point to Pēkan as Muruga.

In poem No. 143, it is mentioned that Pēkan's wife, Kaṇṇagi was abandoned by him. At the same time, his gifts are said to be innumberable, and his abode is said to be a small town set on the top of a hill abounding in water-falls. The first few lines refer to the Kuṛavar's pūja for rain, and we are left with the feeling that the rains came by Pēkan's grace. The story of Kaṇṇagi's estrangement is continued in poem No. 144, and his new love is said to be like one from amongst the musical troupe. (The close resemblance between this and the story of Muruga raking for second wife Vaḷḷi, of the Kuṛavar community, may be seen).

Referring to the grace (அருள்) exhibition by Pēkan in the peacock incident, the musician (devotee) beseeches him (145) to do justice (ஏரும்படர்க்கோலே), and take back Kaṇṇagi. This, he says, is his only prayer.

In poem Nos. 146 and 147, these matters are further developed, and details of Pēkan's dress, bearing, abode, etc., are added as also about the musicians and songsters. The latter come with small lutes, singing melodious tunes, by paths leading over many hills, where there are many water-falls, and where the rain drops make sweet music.

Naḷḷi (கண்டீரக்கோப்பெருநள்ளி)

The Seven Last Chieftains (of the Saṅgam) (கடை ஏழு வள்ளல்) are listed in poem 158 (by Peruñchittanār) as (1) Pāri, (2) Ori, (3) Malaiman (Kāri), (4) Adiyamān, (5) Pēkan, (6) Āy and (7) Naḷḷi. This last chieftain is celebrated in these poems (148–150), where he is treated in most general terms. Naḷḷi lives on the top of a high mountain with roaring waterfalls, and gives bounteous gifts (148). His generosity in food and drinks has confused the musicians, and made them forget the proper time

assigned to the various melodies (149). Poem No. 150 describes an incident when Naḷḷi appears, while on his deer-hunting rounds, one day, with blood-stained anklets (கழல்) on his feet before a group of tired, hungry aud poverty-stricken musicians resting on the way-side. Having cooked some venison food, he offers it to them. Then he quietly disappears without revealing his name and country to the now curious musicians, who now learn from other way-farers that he is the guardian of the high mountains (நளி மலை நாடன் நள்ளி அவன்), and of the neighbouring hills where the waters run crystal-clear. The plot and whole atmosphere of this poem is suggestive of those stories which pilgrims love to relate about their favourite saint or God.

Review

The need for keeping this article as brief as possible made me select this compact group 55 poems where common theme and strain can be presented. The fact that the personalities dealt with are from the earliest times brought together in the legend of the Seven Last Chieftains of the Sangam gives them a much-needed compactness and cohesion. But the real fact is that there is little to differentiate between poems dealing with these "chieftains" and those concerning other "minor chieftains" such as Kumaṇan, Yēnadi Thirukiḷḷi, Pittankotran, and so on. The distinction is obviously purely conventional (the convention of choosing the number seven will be examined in a separate article). But there is one poem (No. 139) about Nāñjil Vaḷḷuvan (நாஞ்சில் வள்ளுவன்) which holds matters so relevant to the subject under discussion that I cannot help covering it also. It is only the first 8 lines which are of relevance here:

"சுவலழுந்தப் பலகாய
சில்லோதிப் பல்விளைஞருமே
அடிவருந்த நெடிதேறிய
கொடிமருங்குல் விறலியருமே
வாழ்தல் வேண்டிப்
பொய்கூறேன் மெய்கூறுவல்
ஓடாப்பூட்கை யுரவோர்மருக
உயர்சிமைய வுழாஅநாஞ்சிற்பொருந"

This may be read as:

தோள்வடுப்பட பல முட்டைக்களையும் காவியு சில்வாய மயிரை யுடைய பல இளையோரும் அடிவருந்த நெடும்பொழுது ஏறிய கொடி போலும் இடையினையுடைய விறலியரும் இவர்; பொய் சொல்லேன் மெய் சொல்லுவேன்; புறங்கொடாத மேற்கோளையுடைய வலியோர் மரபிலுள்ளோனே !...........

Translated this would mean: "O Lord of the high if (immovable or unploughed) hills called Nāñjil, descendant of him who never fled from the battle-field, I address you on behalf of those who come behind me, and hence I speak the truth. They come with lacerated wounds on their neck and shoulders climbing long distances with great difficulty, childern with scarce any hair (bald, Clean-Shaven) on their head, and young women with dainty waist".

Such seenes are seen even to-day of the pilgrims climbing the hill-shrines, such as Paḻani, the heads of children being clean-shaven in fulfilment of vows. The wounds on the shoulders and neck (line 1) could only come from carrying hard loads, such as the Kāvaḍi of today (காவடி), on the long rough climb up. In passing, attention may be drawn to line 7, which agrees almost verbatim with line 4 of poem No. 126 (quoted earlier), addressed to Kāri, even though the poets are different, the composer of the first being called "ஒருசிறைப் பெரியனார்" and of the latter "மாறோக்கத்து நப்பசலையார்"

Preliminary to drawing any general conclusions, the important features of the poems studied here may perhaps first be listed.

First, in regard to their value as historical materials, there is very little that could serve the purpose. There are no doubt names of the "chieftains", and of places whose geographical location could be placed with some plausibility, but the personality, dress and habits of the chiefs and their people, and the nature of their territory are described in very general and stereotyped terms. Some of the phrases, words and poetic imagery repeat themselves, indicating their conventional nature. The lack of distinct individual traits seem to indicate that they are all

based on one single model. The misfortune of Pāri's daughters may perhaps be deemed to be an exception, but even here there is so little concrete details available that a suspicion arises that it is a myth. The exact nature of such a myth and its context in Hindu mythological systems can only be established by a separate study, which would take into account other mythological material, of which there is much in this compilation of poems.

There is much description of songsters, dancers and musical troupes (பாணர், விறலியர்). Their relationship with their patrons is that of devotees rather than that of followers.

In this connection it would be relevant to refer to the account given by Megasthenes (the Greek Ambassador to India C. 300 B.C.), and quoted by the Roman writer Arrian in his "Indica" of some religious activities, which are thought to be the earliest descriptions of Bhakthi cults in India.

Arrian says, "......... and that the Indians worship other gods, and Dionysus himself in particular with cymbals and drums, because he so taught them; and that he also taught them the Satyric dance, or, as the Greeks call it, the Kordax; and that he instructed the Indians grow long in honour of the God, and to wear the turban; and that even up to the time of Alexander the Indians were marshalled for battle to the sound of cymbals and drums" (p. 221 "Classical Recounts of India" by R. C. Majumdar (Firm K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1960).

The similarity between this and the practices mentioned in the Puṟa-nāṉūṟu cannot be missed.

The deity concerned in the Bachanalian scenes of Megasthanes cannot be definitely established (though much speculation exists thereon), but there can be no such difficulty in identifying the deity of these poems. It is undoubtedly Śiva. Who but He can have the blue-throat (which is also the same thing as blue ornaments on the throat), the spear in hand, the waxing moon on the head, the hair-style, the addiction to the vēṅgai (வேங்கை),

and the anklets? Who but He can be the hunter of deer, living in remote forests and on hill-tops abounding in water-falls? It is Śiva who loves his dance and eats from the skull bowl. It is Śiva, the medicine-man, who gives the immortal gooseberry and who bestows grace (அருள்) on his devotees. He is available to poor songsters, dancers, and musicians, and not to warriors and kings, even though He himself is the undefeated Lord of Wars. To His devotees He gives not only earthly gifts but even Himself, and He has a son, young and beautiful, himself a warrior of no mean ability.

Conclusion

We are, therefore, led to the conclusion that these so-called Seven Last Chieftains of Saṅgam are really various manifestations of Śiva not exactly Śiva as we know him to-day, but One as known to that age, when many of the qualities had not, as in later times, been separated from him and bestowed on His son, Muruga, and also when philosophy and metaphysics had not bestowed on His new attribution.

One thing, however, is very clear that these poems reveal the existence of Bhakthi cults in Tamiḻ Nāḍu at the very earliest times. The fact that the mode and style of worship should bear such a close similarity to Greek accounts of the 3rd Century B.C. may prove to be useful data. Further and more detailed researches may help to date the period of these poems and it may even prove possible to find in the Cōḻas, Cēras and Pāṇḍyas of these poems, thc rulers of those names referred to by Asoka in his edicts, if a satisfactory explanation could be found for the evidence which seems to point to a contradictory conclusion.

I would not like it to be thought that I am denying in toto the historical existence of these chieftains. It is possible that they did in reality exist, but if so, the poet and devotee has combined his art with that of the courtier in skilfully weaving into his praise of his liege-lord attributes of divinity. Whether a warrior chieftain would be pleased if his praises are limited to these matters is, of course, another matter.

But these are only preliminary conclusions which require much more analysis of the literature before they can be treated as final. A detailed comparative study of the mythology, and religious symbolism, as well as a careful examination from the angle of Linguistics of the whole literature is called for. It is possiblel that such a study might even find in these poem a cultura connection with the beginnings of the Tamil Śaiva Siddhāntism, and Tirumūlar's Tirumandiram.

APPENDIX

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வலம் படு வாய்வாள் ஏந்தி, ஒன்னார்
களம் படக் கடந்த கழல் தொடித் தடக் கை
ஆர் கலி நறவின், அதியர் கோமான்!
போர் அடு திருவின் பொலந் தார் அஞ்சி!
பால் புரை பிறை நுதற் பொலிந்த சென்னி
நீல மணி மிடற்று ஒருவன் போல
மன்னுக—பெரும: நீயே, தொல் நிலைப்
பெருமலை விடரகத்து அரு மிசைக் கொண்ட
சிறியிலை நெல்லித் தீம் கனி குறியாது,
ஆதல் நின் அகத்து அடக்கி,
சாதல் நீங்க, எமக்கு ஈத்தனையே:

109

அளிதோதானே, பாரியது பறம்பே!
நளி கொள் முரசின் மூவிரும் முற்றினும்
உழவர் உழாதன நான்கு பயன் உடைத்தே!
ஒன்றே, சிறியிலை வெதிரியின் நெல் விளையும்மே;
இரண்டே, தீம் சுளிப் பலவின் பழம் ஊழ்க்கும்மே;
மூன்றே, கொழுங் கொடி வள்ளிக் கிழங்கு வீழ்க்கும்மே;
நான்கே, அணிநிற ஓரி பாய்தலின், மீது அழிந்து,
திணி நெடுங் குன்றம் தேன் சொரியும்மே
வான் கண் அற்று, அவன் மலையே; வானத்து,
மீன் கண் அற்று, அதன் சுனையே; ஆங்கு,
மரம்தொறும் பிணித்த களிற்றினிர் ஆயினும்,
புலம்தொறும் பரப்பிய தேரினிர் ஆயினும்,

தாளின் கொள்ளலிர்; வாளின் தாரலன்;
யான் அறிகுவென், அது கொள்ளும் ஆறே:
சுகிர் புரி நரம்பின் சீறியாழ் பண்ணி,
விரை ஒலி கூந்தல் நும் விறலியர் பின் வர,
ஆடினிர் பாடினிர் செலினே,
நாடும் குன்றும் ஒருங்கு ஈயும்மே.

122

கடல் கொளப்படா அது, உடலுநர் ஊக்கார்,
கழல் புனை திருந்து அடிக் காரி! நின் நாடே;
அழல் புறந்தரூஉம் அந்தணரதுவே;
வீயாத் திருவின் விறல் கெழு தானை
மூவருள் ஒருவன், 'துப்பு ஆகியர்' என
ஏத்தினர் தரூஉம் கூழே, நும் குடி
வாழ்த்தினர் வரூஉம் இரவலரதுவே;
வடமீன் புரையும் கற்பின், மட மொழி,
அரிவை தோள் அளவு அல்லதை,
நினது என இலை நீ பெருமிதத்தையே.

125

பருத்திப் பெண்டின் பனுவல் அன்ன,
நெருப்புச் சினம் தணிந்த நிணம் நயங்கு கொழுங் குறை,
பரூஉக் கள் மண்டையொடு, ஊழ் மாறு பெயர
உண்கும், நிற் காண்கு வந்திசினே,
நள்ளாதார் மிடல் சாய்த்த
வல்லாள! நின் மகிழ் இருக்கையே.
உழுத தோன் பகடு அழி தின்றாங்கு
நல் அமிழ்து ஆக, நீ நயந்து உண்ணும் நறவே;
குன்றத்து அன்ன களிறு பெயர,
கடந்து அட்டு வென்றோனும், நிற் கூறும்மே;
'வெலீஇயோன் இவன்' என.
'கழல் அணிப் பொலிந்த சேவடி நிலம் கவர்பு
விரைந்து வந்து, சமம் தாங்கிய,
வல் வேல் மலையன் அல்லன் ஆயின்,
நல் அமர் கடத்தல் எளிதுமன், நமக்கு' எனத்
தோற்றோன்தானும், நிற் கூறும்மே,

‘தொலைஇயோன் இவன்’ என.
ஒரு நீ ஆயினை—பெரும! பெரு மழைக்கு
இருக்கை சான்ற உயர் மலைத்
திருத் தகு சேஎய்: நிற் பெற்றிசினோர்க்கே.

126

ஒன்னார் யானை ஓடைப் பொன் கொண்டு,
பாணர் சென்னி பொலியத் தைஇ,
வாடாத் தாமரை சூட்டிய விழுச் சீர்
ஓடாப் பூட்கை உரவோன் மருக!
வல்லேம் அல்லேம் ஆயினும், வல்லே
நின்வாயில் கிளக்குவம்ஆயின், கங்குல்
துயில் மடிந்தன்ன தூங்கு இருள் இறும்பின்,
பறை இசை அருவி, முள்ளூர்ப் பொருந:—
தெறல் அரு மரபின் நின் கிளையொடும் பொலிய
நிலமிசைப் பரந்த மக்கட்கு எல்லாம்
புலன் அழுக்கு அற்ற அந்தணாளன்,
இரந்து செல் மாக்கட்கு இனி இடன் இன்றி,
பரந்து இசை நிற்கப் பாடினன்; அதற்கொண்டு
சினம் மிகு தானை வானவன் குட கடல்,
பொலம் தரு நாவாய் ஓட்டிய அவ் வழி,
பிற கலம் செல்கலாது அனையேம் அத்தை
இன்மை துரப்ப, இசை தர வந்து, நின்
வண்மையின் தொடுத்தனம், யாமே—முன் எயிற்று
அரவு எறி உருமின் முரசு எழுந்து இயம்ப,
அண்ணல் யானையொடு வேந்து களத்து ஒழிய,
அருஞ் சமம் ததையத் தாக்கி, நன்றும்
நண்ணாத் தெவ்வர்த் தாங்கும்
பெண்ணை அம் படப்பை நாடு கிழவோயே!

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மன்றப் பலவின் சினை மந்தி
இரவலர் நாற்றிய விசி கூடு முழவின்
பாடு இன் தெண் கண், கனி செத்து, அடிப்பின்,
அன்னச் சேவல் மாறு எழுந்து ஆலும்,
கழல் தொடி ஆஅய் மழை தவழ் பொதியில்—
ஆடுமகள் குறுகின் அல்லது,
பீடு கெழு மன்னர் குறுகலோ அரிதே.

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முன் உள்ளுவோனைப் பின் உள்ளினேனே !
ஆழ்க, என் உள்ளம் ! போழ்க, என் நாவே !
பாழ் ஊர்க் கிணற்றின் தூர்க, என் செவியே !—
நரந்தை நறும் புல் மேய்ந்த கவரி
குவளைப் பைஞ் சுனை பருகி, அயல
தகரத் தன் நிழல் பிணையொடு வதியும்
வட திசையதுவே வான் தோய் இமயம்,
தென் திசை ஆஅய் குடி இன்றாயின்,
பிறழ்வது மன்னோ, இம் மலர் தலை உலகே.

REPORTS OF SEMINARS

The Institute of Traditional Cultures held a Seminar at 4 p.m. on 4th September, 1974 in Room No. 48 of the University Departmental Building on "Ancient Tamil Music" led by Dr. Selvi L. Isaac, Head ot the Department of Indian Music, Madras University. The following is a Report of the Proceedings of this seminar.

Present

Dr. Smt. Alamelu Govindarajan, M. Litt., Ph. D., Department of Music (Research Section), Kalākshētra, Adyār, in the Chair.

Dr. Selvi L. Isaac, M. A., Ph. D., Head of the Department of Music - Leader.

There was an audience of 62 persons.

In the absence of the Director of the Institute, Dr. K. K. Pillay, Dr. Smt. Alamelu Govindarajan presided, introduced the Leader and requested her to lead the seminar.

Dr. Selvi Isaac then read out her leading speech.

I am grateful to Dr. K. K. Pillai the Director of the Institute of Traditional Cultures for giving me this opportunity to lead this seminar and place before you the following facts about Ancient Tamil Music. I also thank Dr. Mrs. Govindarajan for consenting to take the chair and for the nice things she said about me.

From very ancient times music has occupied a very elevated place in the lives of the people. Great poets have sung its praises and kings have patronised and bountifully rewarded eminent musicians. It is universal and its power and its greatness can never be fully assessed. To us in India it represents God and many great men have attained bliss by worship of sound or nāda. While outside Tamilnāḍu—specially in the north—music went through

many vissicitudes due to various invasions, in the South, protected by the natural barriers of the Vindhyas and Satpuras, music continued to grow in its pristine purity. The Tamiḻ people gave the central place in their culture *i.e.*, Iyal, Isai and Nātakam, to Isai or music, as the other two could shine only when accompanied by music. The greatness and power of music can be gauged from the taming of the mad elephant by Udayaṇan playing on the yāḻ and the Asunama being captured by playing music to it. To fully appreciate the music of the Tamiḻ people, we should know something of their time, language, history and society.

The date of the third Tamiḻ Saṅgam has been fixed at the 2nd Century through the researches of scholars like Bishop Caldwell, Dr. Kanakasabai Pillai, L. D. Swamikannu Pillai, Venkayya, Raghava Iyyangar, Dr. Arokiasami, Vyapuri Pillai and Dr. K. K. Pillai. The foreign travellers and writers of the 1st and 2nd century, like Strabo, Pliny, Ptolemy and the work Periplus Maris Erythraci also furnish us with reliable data for fixing the age of Tamiḻ literature. Seṅguṭṭuvan's campaign to the north also took place in the 2nd century, as, we are told in the Silappadikāram that many kings of the north ranged themselves against him. Hence the Saṅgam age can be fixed at 3rd century A. D. as not only Silappadikāram, but also almost all the works of the period describe Seṅguṭṭuvan as a contemporary.

This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that when Seṅguṭṭuvan built a temple for Kaṇṇagi, and made grants of land and arranged for daily pūja to be performed, Gajabāhu the King of Śri Laṅka who ruled between 171-193 A.D. and other kings prayed in the temple along with him. According to Pattupāṭṭu Seṅguṭṭuvan ruled for fifty five years, roughly between 170 and 226 A. D. Hence we can conclude chronologically and historically that no poet of the Saṅgam age could have lived earlier than the 2nd century A. D. Further evidence of the age of the last Saṅgam comes from the study of stars by astrologers. According the position of the stars Kaṇṇagi burnt Madurai on Āḍi Friday, Bhavāni Kritigai which is equivalent to some where between 100 and 198 A. D. Having fixed the time of the Saṅgam let us now go into the subject proper.

From a study of the works of the Saṅgam period it is evident that music played a very important part in the daily life of the people. Encouraged and patronised by the kings and chieftains, poets and musicians brought forth poetical and musical works of high quality in great numbers. Mr. Sesha Iyer in his book "The Chēra kings of the Saṅgam period" says that "those kings liberally patronised poetry and song and were easily accessible to poets and singers of both sexes of all classes and creeds and they were all munificently rewarded without any distinction." Music was patronised not only in courts, but also in urban life. Poets and bards going from one court to another with their instruments in their bags, in the hope of obtaining the favours of the king was a common sight in Tamiḻnādu.

Music was held in high esteem in those days. It is from the works of the last Saṅgam that we are able to gather much material regarding the music and musical instruments of the Tamiḻ people. There are references to works on music like *Mutunārai*, *Muthukuruku*, *Sikaṇḍiyār*, *Isai nuṇukkam*, *Ciṟṟisai*, *Pērisai* and *Pañchabhāratīyam* in the Tamiḻ literature of the period. These works are believed to have been lost in the great deluge which destroyed Tenmadurai, Kapāḍapuram and Kāvirippūmpaṭṭinam. What little we know of the music of the early Tamils is gathered from the works of the third Saṅgam such as *Pattuppāṭṭu*, *Eṭṭuttogai*, *Agam*, *Naṟṟiṇai*, *Kuṟuntogai*, *Paripādal*, and *Tēvāram*, *Divyaprabandam*, *Tiruvilaiyāḍalpurāṇam* and above all, the *Silappadikāram*. The last mentioned work, though it relates the story of the anklet, is also considered to be a text book on music, because it gives us a clear picture of the art, as it was practised in the 1st and 2nd centuries i.e. the last Saṅgam.

About 1800 years ago, for more than four hundred years, Iyal, Isai and Nātakam, together known as Muttamiḻ was in the height of its glory. Language was divided into poetry, music and drama and the munificence of kings and genius of poets and musicians developed and perfected them. When Iyal Tamiḻ was sung to music, it came to be called puṇ. Though the term 'puṇ' usually denoted rāga, it was also attributed to poems

sung to music. Puṇs combined with abhinaya or actions came to be called Nāṭakam. Since music was loved and practised in all parts of the country, undoubtedly the people would have been highly cultured. We are told that they sang 12000 puṇs played on the Yāḻs having 1000, 100, 27 and 17 strings.

The power of music can never be over-estimated. Sambandar calls it "பகையுமவியும் பாட்டு". The reference to Rāvaṇa singing the Irańgaṛ puṇ when caught under the Kailās mountain, Ānaya-nāyanār and his divine flute play, Tiruneelakaṇṭa Nāyanār and his yaḻ play, Bānabadrar and his music, the Tēvarakāras and the miracles they performed are sufficient evidence of the fact that music was held in high esteem by the ancient Tamils.

Srutis and Svaras

Music in all its varied aspects developed in Tamiḻ Nāḍu from very ancient times. Srutis, Svaras, Rāgas, Tālas, musical instruments and compositions are the important concepts of music and they all find elaborate treatment in Tamiḻ works, especially the Silappadikāram It was an accepted fact that there are twenty two srutis as seen from the following lines in Āççiar Kuravai.

"குரற்றுத்தம் நான்கு கிளை மூன்றிரண்டாம்
குரையாவுழை யிளிநான்கு—விரையா
விளரிஎனின் மூன்றிரண்டு தாரமேனச் சொன்னார்
களரிசேர் கண்ணுற்றவர்"

The srutis alloted to the seven svaras gives us the total of twenty two. Sruti is the smallest audible difference in pitch that could be clearly distinguished by the human ear. It is also sometimes referred to as 'பற்று' patru.

The twenty two srutis were distributed among the seven svaras which were known as Isai. The term svara does not occur in any of the Sańgam works. Kallāḍanār says "நான்மறைப் பயனும் ஏழிசையும்" i.e. they are the fruit of the four *vedas*. Sometimes svaras are referred to as "Narambu". Narambu usually stands for the string of the yāḻ, but since the seven strings of the common yaḻ are tuned to the seven svaras, they too came to

be called narambu. The seven svaras were named **kural, tuttam, kaikiḷai, uḷai, iḷi,** viḷari and tāram.

> " குடமுதலிடமுறையாக குரற்றுத்தம்
> கைக்கிளையுழையிளி விளரிதாரமென
> விருதருபூங்குழல் வேண்டிய பெயரே" ஆச்சியர் குரவை 38-40

We find these names given in *Piṅgala Nigaṇḍu* and *Chēndan Divākaram* also. Another set of names given to the svaras is found in the same Āççiyar Kuravai where seven shepherd girls named after the seven svaras stand in a circle and dance to entertain Kaṇṇagi. Here Kural is Māyavan or Krishna, Tuttam is Pinnai his beloved Vellayāyavan in pançama and Tāram is Mundai the brother of Krishna. The other three notes Kaikiḷai, Uḷai and Vilari did not have other names. These seven svaras were indicated by the long vowels.

> " ஆ, ஈ, ஊ, ஏ, ஐ, ஓ, ஔ இவ்வேழுத்தும் ஏழிசைக் குரிய "

says Chēndan Divakaram. Aḍiyārku-nallār says that the twelve svarastanas were placed under the twelve constellations, starting with Taurus. The seven notes of the basic scale, beginning with pa or iḷi come under Taurus, Cancer, Leo, Libra, Sagittarius. Aquarius and Pisces.

As in the case of the music practised out side Tamiḻnāḍu, found in Sanskrit treatises, every puṇ has four kinds of notes, namely, iṇai, Kiḷai, Pakai and Natpu.

> " இணை கிளை பகை நட்பென்றிந்நான்கி
> விசை புணர் குறிநிலை எய்த நோக்கி"

i.e. the puṇ should be played with due attention to these notes. Iṇai means pair or that which unites. It unites the other notes and is the basis on which the other notes of the puṇ are calculated. Kiḷai is the fifth note which supports the iṇai and produces a melodious effect.

> "கிளை எனப்படுவது கிளைக்குங்காலைக்
> குரலேயிளியே துத்தம் விளரி கைக்கிளை—
> எனவந்தாகு மென்ப"

Silap : 8. 33-34.

The five svaras, kuraḷ, iḷi, tuttam, viḷari, kaikiḷai are said to be kiḷai i.e. yiḷi is the kiḷai of kural, tuttam of iḷi, viḷari of tuttam and kaikiḷai of viḷari. These are the first five notes obtained by the Kural-iḷi relationship or the shadja-pañçama bhāva and is the mōhana rāga.

Pakai as the name indicates is the enemy or the discordant note, which should be avoided while singing a puṇ, as it tends to deviate from the real bhāva of the rāga. The third and the sixth notes are pakai. Natpu is the friend—a note of lesser status, but important nevertheless. These four svaras are equivalent to vādi, samvādi, vivādi and anuvādi mentioned in Bharata's *Nātya Sāstra* and other lakshana grantas. These four played a significant role in exposing the svarupa of a puṇ, iṇai by its uniting nature, kilai by its co-operation, natpu by following the other two and pahai by its absence or by its judicious use.

Piṅgala Nigaṇḍu and *Chēndan Divākaram*, also give us a fund of interesting details regarding svaras. The seven isai are produced by the beetle, parrot, horse, elephant, cukoo, cow and goat and in human beings they emanate from the chest, throat, tongue, palate, head, forehead and nose. The fragrance attributed to them, their flavour and the Gods patronising them are also enumerated. Similar details like these we find in Nārada Siksha also.

The stāyis were known as Eyakku (இயக்கு), Tānnilai (தானநிலை) or tānam. Three stāyis or tānam are mentioned with different names in different works. In Arangēṟṟukātai of *Silappadikāram* they are given as valivu, melivu and saman. (aran: L. 93). They are also termed eduttal, paduttal and nalital. *Piṅgala Nigaṇḍu* calls them talai, iḍai and kaḍai (p-27). Adiyārkunallār names them "மந்தேராச்சமன்". All these names stand for tāra, madhya and mandra stāyis. In *Tolkāppiyam* (Kalaviyakkam-78) the upward and downward movements of notes are called selavu and varavu i.e. going and coming. In *Periapurāṇam, Ānāyanāyanārpurāṇam,* it is said that he played the flute with the knowledge of ārōsai and amarōsai which are same as ārōhana and avarōhana.

The ancient Tamils also derived the svaras and puṇs by the Kural-iḷi bhāva also known as Cycle of fifths or shaḍja pañçama bhāva. *Piṅgala Nigaṇḍu* says,

"தாரத்துளுழையும் முழையுட் குரலுங்
குரலுளிளியும், மிளியுட் துத்தமுந்
துத்தத்துள் விளரியும், விளரியுட்கைக்கிளையும்
தம்முட்பிறக்கும் தகுதிய வென்ப"

i.e. from tāram, ūḷai, from ūḷai, kural, from kural iḷi, from iḷi tuttam, from tuttam viḷari and from viḷari kaikiḷai. All these pairs have the kuraḷ-iḷi relationship. What is this relationship? Speaking of the flute master, in *Araṅgēṭṟukātai*, Ilaṅgo Aḍikal says,

ஏற்றிய குரலிளி என்று இருநரம்பின்
ஒப்பக்கேட்கும் உணர்வினன் ஆகி (59-60)

that, it is the consonance produced by sounding kuraḷ and iḷi (sa and 'pa) together. Iḷi is also referred to as '*பட்டடை*' Ilaṅgo Aḍigal .says "*வண்ணப்பட்டடை யாழ்மேல் வைத்தாங்கு*" i.e. he placed the colourful paṭṭaḍai or iḷi note on the yāḻ or in other words, puṇs were played on the yāḻ through the kural-iḷi bhava. Even tuning the yāḻ was done by plucking these two strings together to produce a pleasing effect. This may be the rigin of the practise of tuning instruments to these two basic notes.

Rāgas–Puṇs

The raga concept is the glory of Indian music. It forms the basis of all melody in India. Musical compositions are concrete delineations of the abstract ragas and hence their special value. In ancient Tamiḻ music ragas were known as puṇs. There can be no music without the puṇ, for it is this that glorifies Tamiḻ music. Isaipa and Iyalpa are two forms of poetry, but their difference lies in the fact that the first can be sung only by those who have a knowledge of puṇs, while the second can be studied and recited by anyone. The *Silappadikāram arumpada urai* tells us how puṇs are formed.

"*மன்றுமளிகள் மலர் தேடி மதுவையுண்டு*
மன்று சாரலவை எங்குமன்றியார்க்கும் வகையேபோன்
முன்ன மோசை பலவாகி முழுதும் வேருய் யொன்ருய்த்தென்ன
வென்னுமிசை வளர்த்தும் பண் ணுமாறு தென்போல்"

Just as bees collect honey from various flowers, so also the singer selects notes which combine together beautifully, and creates puṇs.

Puṇ is a general term denoting rāga. It also stands for a musical mode with seven svaras and is the sampūrna raga of the present day. *Piṅgala Nigaṇḍu* and *Divākaram* define it as follows. "*நிறைந்த நரம்பு நிகழ்ந்த பண்ணெனலாகும்*" and "*நிறை நரம்பிற்றே பண்ணெனலாகும்.*" A puṇ has seven svaras. A tiṛam is a rāga where all the seven svaras will not be present "*குறைந்த நரம்பு திறமெனக் கொள்க*" and "*குறைந்த நரம்பிற்றே திறமெனப் படுமே*". The term puṇ also stands for mēla from which tiṛams or janyas are derived. Shādava, audava and Svarāntara rāgas are known as Punniyaltiṛam, Tiṛam and Tirattiṛam. These are scales with six, five and four notes. The same classification is seen in the music outside Tamiḷnāḍu also. Bharata is the earliest writer to mention shādava and audava scales.

It is an interesting fact that the people of Tamiḷnāḍu had recognised the value and logic of classifying rāgas into genus and specie, something which is seen in Sanskrit works only after the 12th century and even then the sampūrna character of rāgas was not envisaged. In Tamiḷnāḍu the concept of Sampūrnatva of parent rāgas was recognised long before it was in the music of India in the 18th century. Even Veṅkatamakhi who formulated the mēlakarta scheme names Bhūpala as the 8th mēla, a rāga which does not have the seven svaras even when the ārōhana and avarōhana are taken together.

The seven svaras kural, tuttam, kaikilai, Uḷai, iḷi Viḷari and tāram had a certain number of srutis alloted to them in the fundamental scale-Vaṭṭappālai.

Piṅgala nigaṇḍu says:

"நான்குநாலு மூன்று மிரண்டு
நான் மூன்று மிரண்டு
குரல் முதலாக் கூறு மென்ப"

kulal, tuttam and iḷi have four srutis each, kaikilai and viḷari three each and uḷai and taram two each. Bharata says—

चतुष् चतुष् चतुष् चैव षड्जमध्यम पञ्चम ।
दैदै निषाद गान्धार त्रिस्रि रिषभ धैवत ॥

Chatush Chatush Chatush Chaiva Shaḍja Madyama Pañchama|
Dai Dai Nishada Gāndhāra Trisri Rishaba Daivata||

allotting three srutis each to sa, ma and pa, three each to ri and da and two each to ga and ni, deriving the shadja grama which with slight adjustments is almost equivalent to our Kharaharapriya the suddha scale of Sanskrit works. The arrangement 4, 4, 3, 2, 4, 3, 2, gives us the suddha scale of Tamiḷ music which is Harikāmbhōji or Vattappālai. Aḍiyārkunallār mentions four puṇs or pālai namely, Āyappālai, Caturappālai, Tirikōnappālai and Vaṭṭappālai, the last one being the most important. How these are derived is not explained.

Rāgās or Puṇs

In *Āççiarkuravai*, Aḍiyārkunallār, diagramatically demonstrates the Vattappālai. A circle, a span in diameter is taken and divided into four parts according to the four directions and these are again divided into three each and the twelve parts are alloted to the twelve constellations. The twelve svarastānas are placed under these. The seven svaras commencing from Kural will come under Libra, Sagittarius, Acquarius, Pisces, Taurus, Cancer and Leo. This is Vaṭṭappālai our Harikāmbhōji.

From Vaṭṭappālai four puṇs are born. These are Pālaiyāḻ, Kurinji yāḻ. Marutayāḻ and Neital yāḻ. Neital yāḻ is called Tiranil yāḻ (திறனில் யாழ்) as it cannot be sung due to dissonant intervals.

தாரத்துழைதோன்ற பாலையாழ்—தண்குர
லொரு முறை தோன்ற குறிஞ்சியாழ்—நேரே
இளி குரலிற் தோன்ற மருதயாழ்—துத்தமிளியிற்
பிறக்க நெய்தலியாழ்''

Apart from these big puns or '*நாற்பெரும்பண்*' or big puns another set of seven puṇs are derived from Vaṭṭappālai by the process of the modal shift of tonic.

"குரல் குரலாகிக் செம்பாலை, துத்தம் குரலாகிப் படுமலைப்பாலை
கைக்கிளை குரலே செவ்வழிப்பாலை, உழைகுரலாகில் அரும்பாலை
இளிகுரலாகில் கோடிப்பாலை, விளரிகுரலாகில் விளரிப்பாலை
தாரம் குரலேல் மேற் செம்பாலை"

Çempālai is the original Vaṭṭappālai. With ri, ga, ma pa, da and ni as the tonic or starting note and by playing the same svaras we get Paḍumalaippālai, Çevvaḻippālai, Arumpālai, Kōḍippālai, Viḷarippālai and mērçempālai, equivalent to Natabhairavi, a puṇ with two madhyamas and no pa, Sankarābharana, Kharaharapriya, Hanumatōdi and Kalyāni mēlas of the present day. It is interesting to note here that when Bharata applied the modal shift of tonic to his Shaḍja grāma, the same scales were derived, but in a different order, as Shaḍja grāma is Kharaharapriya.

According to the following lines of Aḍiyārkunallār in *Āççiar Kuravai.*

"குரலிளியிற் பாகத்தை வாங்கியோரொன்று
வரையாது தாரத்துழைக்கும்—விரைவின்றி
எத்தும் விளரி கிளைக் கீக்க ஏந்திழையாய்
துத்தங் குரலாகுஞ் சொல்"

puṇs are derived by re-alloting the srutis among the svaras thus changing the tonic note and producing new rāgas. The fundamental scale has srutis arranged as follows in Vaṭṭappālai.

Kural	Tuṭṭam	Kaikiḷai	Uḷai	iḷi	Viḷari	Tāram
4	4	3	2	4	3	2

Now two srutis from Kural and iḷi are taken and given to tāram-ulai, viḷari and kaikiḷai, resulting in the new arrangement 2, 4, 4, 3, 2, 4, 3, with ri as sa. This is Paḍumalaipalāi or Naṭabhairavi.

The same process is repeated for each rāga or pālai which gives us Cevvaḻipālai; Arumpalai Kōḍippālai, Viḷarippālai and Merçempālai, with ga, ma, pa, da, ni as Kural or sa.

In Tamiḻ music, there were 103 puṇs but it is not clear how they are derived. The four big puns, palaiyāḻ, kurunji yāḻ, Maruta yāḻ and neital yāḻ, have four eight, four and five tirams, respectively under them. These twenty one, due to the four verieties, Akanilai, Puṛanilai, Aruhiyal and Peruliyal, become eighty four. The four big puṇs also have these four types. So we have a total of hundred puṇs. These with tārappantiram, paiyulkāñçi, and padumalai give a total of hundred and three puṇs. A puṇ is formed from the eight tānās, or stanas from the human body. These are chest, throat, tongue, nose, palate, lips, teeth and head. The eight actions or kriyas through which a puṇ is exposed are, eḍuttal, paḍuttal, naliṭal, mandra, madhya, kuḍilam, kampitam, oli, uruṭtu and ṭākku.

> "பாவோடணைதலிசையென்ருர், பண்ணென்ருர்
> மேவார் பெருந்தானம் எட்டானும்—பாவாய்
> எடுத்தல், முதலா விருநான்கும் பண்ணிப்
> படுத்தமையாற் பண்ணென்று பார்".

Eḍuttal, Paḍuttal and nalital is singing in the three stāyis. Kuḍilam is modulating the voice and making it soft and pleasing. Kampitam is singing with shake or gamaka. Oli is the loud, audible singing or reciting of a mantra. Uruṭṭal is singing with a circular motion or producing a quavering effect. Tākku is to sing or play with emphasis or good volume.

The lakshanas of puṇs may be studied through the following Mudal, Muṛai, Muḍivu. Niṛai, Kuṛai, Kiḻamai, Valivu, Melivu, Saman, Varaiyaṛai and Nīrmai (முதல், முறை, முடிவு, நிறைவு, குறை, கிழமை, வலிவு, மெலிவு, சமன், வரையறை, நீர்மை) Similar to these are Graha, Amsa, Mandra, Tāra, Nyāsa, Apanyāsa, Alpatva, Bahutva, Shādava, Audava mentioned by Bharata and other writers. Mudal is graha or the starting note of a puṇ, muṛai is the sounding note or the central note equal to the amsa, mudivu is nyasa the ending note. Niṛai and kuṛai are a bahutva and al-

patva—notes which should be sung frequently, and those which should be avoided or rarely sung. Kiḷamai is the relationship between notes, valivu, melivu and saman are tāra, mandra and madhya stāyis, Varaiyaṛai is the note on which a part of the rāga or song is concluded and nīrmai is observance of rules. These eleven may be said to similar to the Triōdasa lakshanas of the music practised outside Tamiḻnāḍu. Shādava and audava (Tiratiram & Tiram) are not mentioned because these had become types of ragas by this time.

Puṇs are also based on some subtle details like the rasas they produce, the rules regarding the time of singing and their supernatural powers. A set of twenty four puṇs are given under three heads, Pakal puṇ, Iravu puṇ and Podupuṇ. Pakal puṇs are twelve, iravu puṇs nine and potupuns three.

The twenty four puṇs and their modern equivalents are to be sung in the daytime.

Pakal puṇ

1. Puṛanīrmai — Bhūpalam
2. Gāndhāram —
3. Piyantaigāndhāram
4. Kausikam — Bhairavi
5. Indalam — Māyāmāḷavagaula
6. Takkēsi — Kāmbhōji
7. Sādāri — Pantuvarāli
8. Naṭṭapādai — Gambhīranāṭa
9. Naṭṭarāgam — Nāṭa
10. Paḷampāñchuram — Sankarābharanam
11. Gandhārapañcamam — Kēdaragaula
12. Pañçamam — Ahiri

Iravupun — To be sung at night.

1. Takka rāgam —
2. Paḷantakkarāgam — Arabhi
3. Seekamaram — Nādanāmakriya
4. Kolli — Navarōz
5. Kollikavvānam

6. Vyāḷakuṛiñji — Sourāshtram
7. Mēgharāgakuṛiñji — Nīlāmbari
8. Andālikuṛiñji – Sāma
9. Kuṛiñji — Kuṛiñji

Podupuns — suitable for singing at anytime

1. Ceṿvaḷi — Yadukulakāmbhōji
2. Ceṇturutti — Madhyamāvati
3. Tiruttāṇḍakam — This is not the name of a puṇ, but the padikams set to this are usually sung in Harikāmbhōji or khamās. Many Tēvārams are in the podupuṇs, as they could be sung at anytime i. e. They are Sarvakālikarāgas.

The Navasandhis are nine balipeetas in temples dedicated to the nine Gods presiding over the eight directions, and the centre. During the mahōtsavas, special pūjas were performed in these nine sandhis to ensure the successful completion of the festival and the puṇs to be sung and talas used were prescribed for each. These puns and talas are—

1.	Centre - Brahma - Pañçamam and Mēgharāgakuṛiñji	... Brahmatāla.
2.	East - Indra - Gāndhāram - Kamēsam	... Indra tāla.
3.	South-east - Agni - Kolli	... Mattapana tāla.
4.	South - Yama - Kausikam	... Bhringi tāla.
5.	South West - Niruti - Naṭṭapādai	... Nairuti tāla.
6.	West - Varuna - Sīkāmaram	... Nava tāla.
7.	North West - Vāyu - Takkēsi	... Bali tāla.
8.	North - Kubēra - Takka - Takkēsi	... Koṭṭari tāla.
9.	North east - Isāna - Pañçamam	... Ṭakkiri tāla.

It is interesting to note that reference to ālapti is made in the commentaries of *Silappadikāram.* In *Arangētṛṛukātai* Aḍiyārkunallār explains how ālatti or ālapti should be sung. Singing of ālatti should begin with the syllable 'm' and long and short syllables should be used and rendered with the letters tenna and tēna or by combining the two into tennatēna. Ālatti is of two kinds aççu and pāranai, the first with tāla and the second with dance. There are three kinds of ālaṭṭi, kāṭṭālaṭṭi, niravālaṭṭi and puṇṇālaṭṭi. Ālaṭṭi should

be sung with the short and long vowels and among the eighteen consonants (மெய்யெழுத்து), only ma, na, and ta should be used. This reference to the letters to be used is very useful as it shows that the art of singing ālapana also had developed beyond the preliminary stage. The account of how Śiva came in the guise of a wood cutter to the rescue of Bāṇabadrar when challenged by the northern musician, and sang the sādāripuṇ is evidence of the fact that ālāpa was sung in early time by the Tamils.

Tāḷas

Tāḷa or time is a very important aspect of music. A natural instinct for keeping time is inherent in every human being. Even the earliest man, when he sang or danced or played on his crude instruments during the festive occasions in the village he kept accurate time by the movements of his body, clapping his hands or striking bits of stone or wood together. Music without tāla is like a boat left in mid-ocean without oar or rudder to guide it. श्रुतिर्माता लयपिता । (Srutirmāta Layapita) emphasises the importance of tāla. That tāla is very subtle and cannot be understood easily, can be assessed from the following verse in the *Tāḷasamuttiran* by Vanapādasūḍāmaṇi

> "தென்றல் வடிவும் சிவனுர் திருவடிவும்
> மன்றல் வடிவு மதன் வடிவும் குன்ருதவேயினிசை
> வடிவும் வேதவடிவும் காணி
> லாயதாளம் காணலாம்"

He says that if one can see the southern breeze, the form of Śiva, and of the Vēdas and the music of the flute then he can see the form of tāla. Sri Tyāgarāja says that the music accompanied by the tāla of mridaṅga is conducive to bliss, in the kriti 'Sogasugammridaṅga tāḷamu' in Srīrañjani.

All musical aspects of gīta, vadya and nritta, are based on tāla. It gives stability and liveliness to music. It is based on the three kinds of measurement kuṟil, neḍil and alapeḍai i.e.; hrsva, dhīrga and extension of sound. A study of the metre of Tēvāram hymns shows that they would have been set only to simple tālas corresponding to ādi, rūpaka and ēka. This was

necessary because the hymns belonged to the realm of sacred music and hence complicated time-measure would spoil the spontaneity and simplicity the songs. But tāḷa was necessary for the correct recital of the hymns. The fact that Tirugñānasambandar was mysteriously provided with a pair of golden cymbals to accompany his singing establishes the importance of tāḷa.

A perusal of ancient Tamiḷ literature gives us some insight into the tāḷa system of early times. Many references to Tāḷa are seen in these works. Pāṇi and tāḷam are the two words connoting tāḷa. Someone has said. "கையாலே போடுவது பாணி, தாளாலே போடுவது தாளம்" i.e. when reckoned with the hands it is Pāṇi and when reckoned with the feet (as in dance) it is tāḷam. Tāḷa was indicated by the words, seer, pāṇi and tūkku. The first is the rhythmical setting of the song, and is of seven kinds. According to Aḍiyārkunallār, seer and pāṇi stand for tāḷam. The lines

"சீரினிது கொண்டு நரம்பினிதியக்க
யாழோர் மருதம் பண்ண"

— (*Maduraikāñchi*—657-658)

and பேய்ப்பெண்டிர்
"எடுத்தெறியனந்தர் பறைசீர் தூங்க"

— (*Puṟanānuṟu*—52)

make it clear that seer is tāḷa and it played an important part in yāḻ play and in dance where the paṟai indicated the tāḷa. Tūkku is a variety of time measure having a duration of two mātras, equal to a guru.

Tāḷa consists of four elements namely, kottu, asai, tūkku and aḷavu. Kottu has the value of half a matra, or two akshara kāḷa, equal to the modern drutam. Its symbol is the letter 'க'. Asai has one mātra or four akshara kāla, equal to the chaturasra laghu. Its symbol is 'ơ'. Tūkku has two mātras and the symbol 'உ'. The last aḷavu corresponds to the plutam with three matras or twelve akshara kāla and the symbol '.:.' The kriya or action of koṭtu is a beat, that of asai, the wave after the beat, tūkku is the beat and the wave, and aḷavu is a beat and a pause for

three matras and is equal to the plutam. These four aṅgas equal to the drutam, laghu, guru and plutam are used in the 108 tāḷas of ancient times.

In the Tevāram hymns only the paṇs for each padikam is given. The tāḷa is not mentioned, but the fact that Tirugñānasambandar sang to the accompaniment of golden cymbals shows that they were sung to tāḷa. Sundarar in one of his hymns says that when Sambandar kept taḷam with his tender hands, Siva himself presented him with these cymbals with the panchākṣara inscribed on them, so that his hands may not be hurt. Thus the time had to be kept with the hands or, some instrument.

The hundred and eight tāḷas were in use during the age of Tamils and Tamiḻ music. Aḍiyārkunallār mentions the five tāḷas caccarputam, cācarputam, sarpitāputtirikam, sambattuvēttam and urkattitam. These belong to the realm of sacred music, as Lord Siva is said to have performed the tānḍava nrittan to them. These are the first five among the hundred and eight and are known as the pañcatāḷa. They made use of the aṅgas laghu, guru and plutam. These did not hold the attention of the people for long, as simple tāḷas were more in keeping with the Tēvāram and other compositions of the time and so in course of time they fell out of use. Other groups of tāḷas are the sixteen beginning with ēkatāḷa, the fortyone beginning with Pārvatilōçanam and the eleven beginning with Ontranpāṇi, but these also have become absolute.

The reference to drums with the names cacaputam and urkattitam suggests that they would have been constructed specially to play these two tāḷas. Drums to keep time was used for all kinds of performances, vocal, instrumental and dance. The metal cymbals gave out the basic rhythm for all music "தண்டும் தாளமும் குழலும் தண்ணுமையும்". In a dance performance a tāḷa vādya is indispensable, even if other instruments are not used. The devil dance was performed to the accompaniment of paṛai alone. All drums were and are used primarily to emphasise the tāḷa for, without it music will lose its stability, liveliness and charm.

Musical instruments

Indian music includes vocal music, instrumental music and dance. While instruments can exist by themselves and give performances, vocal music and dance can be complete only with the accompaniment of musical instruments. Instrumental music is absolute music and it is of great use to society in its various spheres such as entertainment, temple music, folk music and martial music. Our country is a store-house of innumerable musical instruments of the three varieties, varying from very crude simple ones capable of producing just a few notes or the basic rhythm, to highly evolved ones, each with an individuality of its own, with elaborate construction facilities for tuning and complicated technique of play.

The instruments that have been evolved during the course of long centuries are known in Tamiḻ music as Narambukkaruvi, Tuḷaikkaruvi, Tōlkaruvi and Kañcakkaruvi the last two being percussion instruments. In general they are called palliyam (பல்லியம்). There are hundreds of them with distinct names, shape, method of play and quality of tone. Since the materials used for making them are easily available in the country, without much cost, innumerable instruments are made all over India. The same is the case in other countries, but nowhere is such a large number and variety found. The importance of instrumental music, may be assessed from the fact, that, in addition to her training in dance, Mādhavi was expected to be proficient in playing the yāḻ, the flute and the mrdaṅgam also and hence, she was trained by experts in these instruments.

Numerous instruments belonging to the three groups were used in Tamiḻnāḍu and there are innumerable references to these in the earliest Tamiḻ literature. Various kinds of yāḻ are mentioned such as Pēriyāḻ, Sakōḍayāḻ, Makarayāḻ and Ciriyāḻ with 21, 14, 19 and 7 strings re.pectively. The *Kallāḍam* describes the Nārada-pēriyāḻ with 1000 strings, keeçaka pēriyāḻ with 100 strings, Tumburu yāḻ with nine and Maruttuva yāḻ with one string. The yāma yāḻ is referred to in *Rāmāyana.* The thousand stringed yāḻ could have been only in the poet's fancy, as such an instrument

would be a practical impossibility due to its size, difficulty in tuning the vast number of strings, playing on them and in carrying it from place to place.

Descriptions of the yāḷ are found in *Pattupāṭṭu*, *Jivakachintāmaṇi* and *Silappadikāram*. The parts of the yāḷ are Pattar (பத்தர்) or the boat shaped body, covered with golden coloured skin called Pōrvai (போர்வை) fixed to the sides with nails. The big half moon shaped hole on the pattar, to let out sound is known as Vaṛuvāi (வறுவாய்). On the middle of the pattar, in a line are a number of holes according to the number of strings. Into these holes are fixed the strings which are thinner than the broken grain of tinai and which shine like gold. The long curved arm of the yāḷ is known as Kōḍu (கோடு). On this are the rings or Tivavu (திவவு) for fixing the strings. The strings are tied tightly to the tivavu and tuning is done by moving this up and down. The strings are known as Kōl or narambu (நரம்பு). The same kind of description is given in all the three works with apt similies.

The technique of yāḷ-play is also enumerated in many works. *Vēnirkātai* describes the manner of holding the yāḷ thus

" வலக்கைபதாகை கோட்டொடுசேர்த்தி
யிடக்கை நால்விரன்மாடகந்தழீ "

II. 27–28

The right thumb stays at the bottom of the Kōḍu, while the fingers, stay erect to pluck the strings in the position known as patākai (பதாகை). The left hand fingers are brought round the kōḍu and bent over the strings in the position known as māṭakam (மாடகம்). The defects or kuṟṟam in yāḷ play are

" செம்பகை ஆர்ப்பே கூடம் அதிர்வே
வெம்பகை நீக்கும் விரகுளி அறிந்து"

(வேனிற்காதை 29–30)

Cempakai is the harsh note produced due to the bad quality of wood used, Ārppū unduly high pitched note, Kūdam is the dull tone and Atirvu the excessive vibrations or shaking of the string. The player should avoid these defects. The instrument should

be played with due attention to the use of iṇai, kiḷai, pakai and natpu svaras of the rāga. Jeevakan played the yāḻ only after testing it carefully for the defects. The tone of the yāḻ is known as yéḻāl (எழால்).

The defects of the strings are koḍumpuri, excessive tension in fixing them, tūmbu, or frayed ends and, murukku or over-twisting of string. Before she played the yāḻ Mādhavi tested and tuned it by the actions known as Vārttal, Vadittal, Undal, Uraḻtal, Uruṭṭal, Teruttal, Pattadai. Vārttal is the action of the first finger, vadittal is pulling back wards and forwards with the thumb and first finger, undal is thrumming the strings to test them, uraltal is passing from one string to another, uruṭṭal is the quivering notes produced by the circular motion of the string, teruttal is rubbing the strings to test their tone and pattadai is to see through the kural-iḷi bhava whether the strings are tuned accurately.

Many types of yāḻ are enumerated in *Piṅgala Nigaṇḍu* and *Divākaram.* References to the Viṇa are also available. Māṇikkavāsagar mentions both the yāḻ and viṇa in *Tirupallieḻucci.* "வீணையர் ஒருபால், யாழினர் ஒருபால்". This means that the Viṇā and yāḻ were different instruments. Yāḻ is said to be that which had a curved kōḍu and strings for each note, which were plucked by the fingers. When the kōdu was straightened and many notes were played by stopping the strings with the fingers it was known as Vīṇa.

Great care was taken preserve the fine tone of the yāḻ as seen from *Periapurāṇam* Sēkkiḻar where he says that when Tirunīlakaṇṭa Nāyanār was about to play the yāḻ in the temple at Alavai, a voice was heard to say

"அன்பிற் பாணர்பாடும்
சந்தயாழ் தரையின் சீதந்தாக்கின் வீக்கழியும்"

(*Tirunilakaṇṭanāyanār Purāṇam* V. 6)

that a plank or platform should be placed for the musician to stand and play, as tuned strings would lose their tension due to the cold, if it were placed on the ground. Thus is the reason why the pāṇar usually kept their vādyas in a bag made of skin.

A large variety of wind instruments were also used in Tamiḻnādu, for worship, as accompaniments for vocal and dance and as part of palliyam or Orchestra. The conch, also known as valampuri, nandu, kōḍu, saṅku and kokkarai, kuḻal (flute), kōdu (trumpet) iralai, āmbal kuḻal, mullaiku,al, kontraikuḻal, Veelaikuḻal, kalam, siruçinnam, tiruçinnam, Vāṅgiyam, peruvaṅgiyam, tumbu and tārai, were used in various walks of life. The kuḻal or flute is the most important among these.

Wind instruments came to be constructed as a result of man's observance of nature as is seen from these lines in *Aganānūṟu.*

> "தும்பி குயின்ற
> வகலா வன்துளை கோடைமுகத்தலின்
> நீர்க்கியங்கின நிறைப் பின்றை வார்கோ
> லாய குரற்பாணியினது வந்திசைக்கும்."

The tones of shepherd's flute are said to be like these emanating from the holes made by beetles on bamboo canes when wind passes through them, Similar references are seen in Sanskrit works also.

Though flutes may be made of silver, gold, copper, wood and bamboo, yet the bamboo is considered to be best for this purpose, as it gives fine mellow tones. In the *Silappadikāram* and *Jeevakachintāmaṇi* we have the detailed description of how the flute is made. In the *Acciyar kuravai,* the shepherdesses perform what is known as Kuṟavaikūttu to entertain Kannagi. The song which they sing is an invocation to Krishna who plays on the ambarkuḻal, mullaikuḻal and kontraikuḻal. These flutes are so called because their bells or open ends have the shape of the waterlily, jasmine and the fruit of the kontrai tree.

The beauty and enchantment of the music of Krishna's flute and the effect it had on nature—animals, birds and human beings—has been described in lavish terms, by great poets and devotees from very early times. As he drew out divine music from his flute, the Gopis flew to his side leaving their work and children, cows, deer and bulls, forgot to eat what was in their mouths, natural enemies like the peacock and and the snake stood side

by side forgetting their enmity, rivers stopped flowing, trees put-forth blossoms and birds listened in silence. Periaḷvar says,

" மருண்டுமான் கணங்கள் மேய்கைமறந்து
மேய்ந்த புல்லும் கடைவாய்வழி சோ
இரண்டுபாடும் துலுங்காப் படைபெயரா
எழுதுசித்திரங்கள் போல நின்றனவே"

that, at the sound of Krishna's flute, all nature was still like a painted picture. His pipe possessed such irresistible charms that whoever heard it had to forsake everything and listen in rapt attention. Apart from Lord Krishna, Ānāyanāyanār is the first person to have used the flute as a solo instrument.

Ānāyanāyanār was humble, shephered, but his flute had the same charm and power. Before playing he tested the flute by various way to see whether the tones were pure. He placed his lips on the blowing hole or muttirai and played the ārōsai and amarōsai on the six holes to get the correct notes in all the puṇs. This process is known as Vakkaranai (வக்கரணை) i.e. manipulating the holes for producing all the svarastanas with the six holes. As he played, he followed the rules such as niṟṟal (நிற்றல்) or pausing, muralutal (முரலுதல்) or soft humming sound, eḷal (எழல்) or rising in pitch, and suḷal (சுழல்) or whirling circular movement. After this testing the flute and its voice, he played the Kuṟiñji puṇ, changed to Mullaipun and Pālaipuṇ and finally the Kodippālai in the mandra, madhya and tara registers, going up and down or staying in the middle as was suitable. All these details given in Sēkkiḷārs *Periapurāṇam* shows that flute play had developped into a highly technical art.

The yāḷ mulavu and the voice, followed the tone of the flute. The words " குழலொந்துநிற்ப " indicates that the voice and the yāḷ were measured by the flute. " நரம்பின் றீங்குரனிறுக் குங்கோல் " shows that the yāḷ was tuned to the pitch of the flute. The same idea we see in *Bharata's Nātya Sāstra* and Sārangadēvas *Sangitaratnākara* also, where the accompaniments for dance were tuned to the tone of the flute. This was because the flute had a constant tonel colour and itself did not need tuning as its pitch was fixed at the time of its construction.

A large number and variety of percussion instruments were also used for various purposes. In general drums were called taṇṇumai (தண்ணுமை) and were of two kinds tōlkaruvi or skin covered ones and kancakkaruvi or weighty cymbals of wood or metal which keep the basic rhythm. Aḍiyārkunallār mentions about thirty drums under five heads. agamuḻavu or superior drums agappuramuḻavu, those of medium grade, puramuḻavu or inferior ones, purappura muḻavu, paṇṇamaimuḻavu, the war drums, nānmuḻavu which indicates the hours of the day and kalai muḻavu, played in the morning to wake up kings from sleep.

Among drums, the murasu is the most important. It is three kinds, Pōrmurasu (போர்முரசு) or war drum, tyāgamurasu (தியாக முரசு) or sacrificial drum and nyāya murasu (நியாயமுரசு) or judgement drum. It is said that the kings of Tamiḻnāḍu ruled with the aid of these three drums

" முரசுமுன்றுடனாளும்
தமிழ்கெழுகூடற்றன் கோல் வேந்தே "

The pōr murasu is the most important and respected among these as it led the armies to battle. The capture of this drum indicated the defeat of the army and hence it was guarded with great care. It was carefully tied with leather straps and tuned, When not in use it was covered, so that the changing weather may not affect its tone. It had a sound like a clap of thunder.

The fact that it was held in great-fear and respect may be assessed from the fact that special pūjas were performed and even blood offered to it everyday. *Puranānūṟu* tells us of how the great poet Mōsikkeeranār one day lay down on the murasukaṭṭil, ignorant that it was the seat of the murasu and escaped the wrath of the king only because he was a great poet. It is said that the king fanned him while he lay asleep, thus expressing his great veneration for poets also.

The muḻavu or Kuḍamuḻa is a rare instrument having five faces. The five faces are equated with the five faces of Siva, Isānam, Aghōram. Tatpurusham, Vāmadēvam and Sadyōjātam. This drum consists of a huge metal pot opening out on top into

five projecting faces which are covered with skin and is played with the hands. Apart from its use in temples, it was used for dance also. Now we call it the Pañçamukhavādyam, and we have just two or three instances of this drum in the South today, in the Madras museum, in Tiruvārūr temple and in Taraṅgambādi temple. Special drums were used in the five tracts of Tamiḷ Nāḍu such as Vēdartolpaṛai in Pālai, Kuriñji paṛai for Kuriñji, Meenkōtpaṛai, for Neital, Kiṇai for Marudam and Erankōtpaṛa[4] for Mullai.

Drums with single face and double faces are common. *Piṅgaḷa Nigaṇḍu* and *Divākaram* mention a large number of drums. Some have Onomatophonic names (காரணப் பெயர்) such as Karaḍikai with sound like the growling of the bear, Sallari with jingling sound (சல் என்ற ஓசை) Tuḍi, which is small in the middle and broad at the ends, Edakkai which is played with the left hand, Mattalam which sounds "math" (மத்தென்ற ஓசை). Mattalam is so called because it is the basis for all instruments "இசை யிடனாகிய கருவிகட்கெல்லாம் தளமாதலால் மத்தளம் என்று பெயரா யிற்று".

The varieties of drums were innumerable. From the superior Mattalam and Kuḍamuḷa to those used in villages, from those used in times of war to those used in temples, for worship, and those used to accompany vocal, instrumental, and dance performances there were drums for all occasions. Performances could take place without the yāḷ or the flute but the drum was indispensable.

Composers

Life to many of us is a mystery and life after death is still more a mystery. The quest after the highest reality, which should be the end and aim of life, is very often neglected by many of us. But from this life of struggle, it is a relief to turn to the pages of our ancient literature and poetry, to find that our ancients were willing to sacrifice everything and take up the quest of truth. We cannot afford to neglect our ancient heritage, left behind by our great mystics and bhaktas who enriched our music and literature with their sacred songs and lyrics. Tamiḷ literature contains unfathomable treasures, born of the great and deep spiritual experience of saintly men and women.

Among the composers of hymns there have been two sects, the Śaivite and the Vaishnavite. There seems to have been much ill feeling and rivalry between the two sects as is seen even in the hymns they created. Among the great Śaivite saints were the Trimūrtis of Tamiḻ music, Tirujñānasambandar, Tirunāvukkarasar or Appar and Sundaramūrti, and Māṇikkavāsagar. The hymns of the first three were called *Tēvāram* or *Dē-vāram* meaning songs in praise of God. All these hymns are great favourites and contain most striking and beautiful thoughts. It is nearly impossible to give an adequate idea of their beauty and meaning in the English language. Much of their charm depends upon assonance, play upon words, knitting of word with word, and on the intricacy of metre and rhyme. In some of the Tēvārams we see the technical beauty known as Koṇḍukūtti, where a word or syllable from the previous line is prefixed to the next and sung. Ex: "அடுத்தானை" of Appar, sung in yadukulakāmbhoji rāga. This results in what is known as srōtōvāhayati.

The account of the discovery of the *Tēvāram* is known to all. Nambiāṇdār Nambi who was instrumental in discovering them, divided them into seven sections, three of Tirujñānasambandar, three of Appar and one of Sundarar. These form part of the Pannirutirumuṛai of Vēdam of the Tamils.

The lives of these three great saints are known to all, and so it is needless to go into it. Tirujñānasambandar and Appar were contemporaries and lived in the seventh century. Sundarar belongs to the 9th century. Sambandar was the son of Sivapādahirudayār and Bhagavatiyār of Sīrkāḻi. He is the youngest composer in world music, as he started composing in his third year. The first hymn which he sang was "தோடுடைய செவியன்" after having had a *darśan* of Lord Siva and Pārvati and after being fed by her with the milk of wisdom. This is a song with perfect rhyme, rhythm and metre and brimful of beauty and devotion. Ādi Sankara affectionately calls him the Draviḍa Śisu. Tirujñānasambandar lived for a short span of sixteen years, but the great miracles he performed, the sixteen thousand hymns he sang and the great truths he taught could not have been accomplished by an

ordinary human being in so short a time. Many of his hymns chant the praises of Chidambaram.

Tirunāvukkarasu was the son of Pugaḷanār and Mātiniyār and was born in Tiruvāmūr. After the death of his parents he was brought up by his elder sister. Later in life he became a Jain and this caused much misery to his sister, but due to her prayers, he returned to the Śaivite faith, after enduring the tortures inflicted by the king. Emerging unharmed from it all, he sang the well known hymn

'மாசில் வீணையும் மாலை மதியமும்'

He composed fortynine thousand hymns in all, but only three hundred and twelve escaped the ravages of white ants. Many of them express his unworthiness and utter dependence on God. In one hymn he says

"என்ன மாதவம் செய்தாய் நீ நெஞ்சமே
மின்னு வார்சடை வேதவிழுப் பொருள்
செங்கோலர் வயற் செய்யும் செந்நெறி
மன்னு சோதி நம்பால் வந்து வைகவே"

To him God was everything – father, mother, wife and family, as is seen in the hymn "அப்பன்நீ, அம்மைநீ, ஐயனுநீ". Some of his hymns express his great joy and wonder in the knowledge of God's goodness. They all tremble with feeling.

The third of the trio, Sundaramūrti was the son of Chaḍayanār and Esaijñāniyār. He lived for eighteen years. That he lived after Sambandar and Appar is seen in his padikam in which he says,

"நல்லிசை ஞானசம்பந்தனும் நாவினுக்
கரையனும் பாடிய நற்றமிழ் மாலை
சொல்லியவே சொல்லியேத்துகப்பானை"

(that he studied the padikams of his predecessors and sang them in the presence of God and obtained His grace). His first marriage was stopped by Śiva in the garb of an old man, who claimed him to be his slave according to a document executed by his grandfather. Losing his temper he called the old man "பித்தா" (Lunatic) and refused to go with him. Later realising that the old man was

none other than Śiva himself he sang his first padikarm beginning with the words "பித்தா பிறைசூடி பெருமானே அருளாளா." In the wake of this, came many *Tēvārams* praising God and expressing his gratitude for favours received. On the whole compared with the other two Tēvārakāras, his hymns are on a lower plane, though there are some which bear marks of real spiritual experience.

The Tēvāram hymns are often referred to as having so many "கட்டளை" This is worthy of note. Kaṭṭaḷai is a general term denoting the musical and prosodical structure of a puṇ. As far as the *Tēvāram* padikams are concerned, the mention of a certain number of Kaṭṭaḷai for each refers to the number of tunes to which each hymns may be sung. There is ample evidence in inscriptions of the Pallava and Çoḷa period, of the endowments made by the kings for appointing Ōduvārs in various temples and for paying for their services with money and lands or paddy for their sustenance. In one of these inscriptions (S. I. I.-11-65) we are told that during the time of Rāja Rāja Çoḷa, forty eight Ōduvār or Pidarar, and two to play udukkai and maddalam with them, were appointed to sing Tirupadikams in the big temple at Tañjōre. There are many such inscriptions in various temples bearing witness to the patronage extended to Ōduvār by the kings.

The *Tēvāram* hymns belong to the class of songs entitled 'Vārappādal', which has excellence both from point of view of music as well as that of Sahitya. Each song is known as padikam and consists of ten verses. In some there are eleven verses. The names of the temples where they were sung are also incorporated in the songs. The last verse known ae "திருக்கடைக்காப்பு" contains the *mudra* of the composer and also enumerates the benefits acquired by the singing the hymn. To quote an example on Tiruvānmiyur "கரையுலாங்கடலிற்" in puṇ Indaḷam the last verse is as follows :—

"மாதொர் கூறுடை நற்றவ னைத் திருவான்மியூர்
ஆதியெம்பெருமானருள் செய்ய வினவுரை
ஓதி அன்றே காழியுள் ஞான சம்பந்தன் சொல்
நீதியானினை வார் நெடுவானுலகாள்வாரே"

Thirujñānasambandar is the first composer to introduce his *mudra* in his Tēvārams.

Among the Tamiḻ Śaivite saints, none make a stronger devotional appeal than Mānikkavāsagar. His life bears much resemblance to that of St. Paul, St. Augustine and St. Francis of Assisi. It is difficult to assign a definite date to him. Some say that he preceded the Tēvāram trio while others say that he lived after them. But we may reasonably assign him to the 7th century A.D. or before that. *Tiruvāsagam* is even now only recited. That is why we believe that he comes before the Tēvāram composers. If he had come later, his poems would have been set to puṇs. The *Tiruvāsagam* is usually sung to the Mohana-rāga, a very old rāga, whose five svaras are equated with the five syllables of the mantra *Namaśivaya*, and has the first five svaras derived by the kural-iḷi-bhāva. The *Tēvāram* composers did not use this rāga, perhaps due to the great respect they had for Mānikkavāsagar. The fact that Mānikkavāsagar refers to the yāḻ, also shows that he belonged to earlier times, as the yāḻ, became obsolete by the 9th or 10th century.

Mānikkavāsagar was born in Tiruvādavūr, during the reign of Arimartana Pāṇḍya. He grew up to be a wise and promising young man and was made minister to the king. The incident of how he spent the money intended for buying horses on renovating a Śiva temple and how with the help of the Lord, he converted jackals into horses and brought them to the king is well known in "நரி பரியாக்கிய படலம்". Later on, not relishing the life in the court, he went to Chidambaram and spent his life there, pouring out his soul through his rapturous melodies which flowed from his heart.

Among devotional works, his *Tiruvāsagam* is an autobiographical tale of his spiritual life and experience which ultimately enabled him to attain ineffable and eternal joy. His *Tirukōvai* to the superficial reader may seem to be an ordinary text of love poetry. But this only a thin veil covering beautiful religious truths. In this work we find the madhura bhāva predominating.

Madhura bhāva is that type of bhakti or devotion, where the devotion of a human being to God is treated of as that of a woman to the nāyaka of her choice. The joys and sorrows and sufferings a devotee experiences in his search for God is represented as that experienced by a woman longing for her nāyaka (Lord). This concept is seen developed in Tamiḻ music, much earlier than in the music of the rest of India, where we see compositions of this type only in Jayadēvas Ashtapadis in the 12th century and after that. The hymns of Mānikkavāsagar became the eighth Tirumuṛai.

Through the long centuries which followed, the devotional appeal of Mānikkavāsagar has not diminished in the least. There is a common Tamiḻ saying

"திருவாசகத்திற்கு உருகாதார் ஒரு வாசகத்திற்கும் உருகார்"

i.e. one who is not moved by the *Tiruvāsagam* will not be influenced by any words. Apart from these two works, he has also composed songs which maidens could sing during work and play, such as those for grinding and, for games like ball play and shoulder play. The priceless legacy of songs which he has left behind, has contributed largely towards the enrichment of Tamiḻ sacred music.

Contemporary with the Śaivite saints are the Vaishnavite Samayāchāryas or Āḻvār, the authors of the voluminous collection of songs known as *Nālāyiraprabandam* or *Divyaprabandam.* These stand on the same footing as the *Tēvāram* of the Śaiva Samayāchāryas. The Āḻvār provided the soil from which Ramānuja's teachings sprang up later on. It is not Ramānuja, but the Āḻvār, who should be called the 'morning star' of the Bhakti movement. Bhakti to the Āḻvār, was the only path to salvation and all the twelve emphasised bhakti as the mutual relationship of love and trust between the human soul and the over-soul. Vishnu is depicted as the Supreme being, loving, pitying and protecting His devotees. In the hymns of the Āḻvār there are all types of religious thought and it is impossible to appreciate them without remembring the conflict in the midst of which they were produced.

The first three among the twelve are Pēyāḻvār, Bhūtattāḻvār and Poikaiāḻvār. These three met one rainy night under a tree and found God Himself standing with them. They all burst forth into ecstatic song, the result being the first, second and third *Tiruvandādi* of the whole *Prabandam*, each having hundred stanzas. The next is Tirumāḻisai Āḻvār. He composed two poems, *Nānmugan-Tiruvandādi* and *Tiruchandaviruttam* containing 96 and 120 stanzas respectively. He praises Vishnu to the skies, but heaps his anger on Śiva. Nammāḻvār whose songs are the most voluminous, is the greatest of the āḻvārs. Till his sixteenth year he spent his time in yogic meditation and later became a great teacher. His sacred utterances are four in number, *Tiruviruttam*, *Tiruvāsiriyam*, *Tirūvandādi* and *Tiruvāimoḻi*. Madurakavi, his disciple is the sixth Āḻvār. Nothing much is known about him. He has left ten stanzas in praise of his guru and is an example of a devoted sishya.

Kulasēkara Āḻvār, a king of Travancore is the seventh among the twelve. He was a great ruler as well as a religious and moral teacher. He is believed to have lived in the 9th century and composed *Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* in Tamiḻ and *Mahēndramāla* in Sanskrit. The next among the Vaishnavite singers was Periāḻvār, also known as Vishnuchittar. He belonged to Srivilliputtūr and lived some time about the middle of the 9th century. He was given the title 'Pāttarpirān', for having expounded Vēdānta to the king of Madurai. His *Tiruppallāṇḍu* is an ecstatic song praising and expressing his devotion to Vishnu. Many of his songs give exquisite descriptions of Krishna as a babe, child and boy. They make the readers feel that Periāḻvār had actually been with the Lord from his babyhood.

Closely bound with him is the life of Āṇdāḷ, who is the ninth Āḻvār. Periāḻvār found her as a babe under some basil plants, brought her home as God's gift and nurtured and trained her with great love and care. While yet a girl she resolved to marry Sri Krishna and none other. Every day she wore the garland woven by her father for pūja. One day he found a hair in it and on enquiry found that Āṇdāḷ had beautified herself with them. He

threw the garland away as polluted by her. He made a fresh garland and decorated the Lord with it, on going to the temple the next day, he found the flowers in a corner of the temple. The same night Lord Vishnu appeared to him and told him that only the flowers worn by Āṇḍāḷ would be acceptable to Him. The greatness of his daughter was revealed to him through this incident. In course of time, her desire to be wedded to Lord Krishna was fulfilled at Srirangam. Āṇḍāḷ has composed two works, the '*Tiruppāvai*' in thirty stanzas and the '*Nāççiar Tirumoḷi*' in 143 verses. In the first, she celebrates what is known as 'Pāvainonbu' and in the second which means "sacred speech of the queen", she regards Vishnu as the lover and herself as the object of His love. Here again is a work based on Nāyaka-Nāyaki theme, which became the basis for the Ashtapadis, Tarangams, Sringāra Sankīrtans and Padams of later tunes. It is also a matter for pride that Āṇḍāḷ is the first woman composer in the history of World Music.

The tenth Āḷvār Toṇḍaraḍipoḍi belonged to Mannārguḍi. His original name was Vipranārāyana but in great humility he called himself 'Toṇḍaraḍippoḍi' or the dust under the feet of God's servants. The height of his religious experiences is seen in two poems "*Tirumāla*" or 'sacred garland', and *Tiruppaḷḷieḷucci* (திருப்பள்ளியெழுச்சி) He lived in the middle of the 9th century.

The next Āḷvār is Tiruppāṇāḷvār. He was found in a paddy field and brought up by a childless Pāṇar. Being low born he did not dare to enter the temple but satisfied himself by staying near and singing the praises of God. By the direct grace of God he entered the temple and it was such an ecstatic experience that it drew from him the song "Amalan-adi-piran". The last of the Āḷvārs is Tirumangai Āḷvār also known as "கள்ளராழ்வார்". He was born in Tiruvāḷtirunagari near Sirkāḷi. His father was a general in the Cola army and he himself became the head of a small province. He used all his earnings for succouring those in want and when his funds were exhausted, he resorted to unscrupulous means to satisfy his desire to help or feed the poor. This earned for him the name "கள்ளராழ்வார்". He composed

six poems of a highly philosophical nature, compared to the six Vēdāṅgas.

The songs of the Āḷvār command a wide field, from the simple plaintive songs of Toṇḍaraḍippoḍi to the thought laden odes of Nammāḷvār, from the poems of Kulasēkhara Āḷvār to the musical love lyrics of Āṇḍāḷ. The *Nālāyira Divya Prabandam* contains songs for all occasions—worship, marriage, death and even cremation. They need little explanation to be intelligible. They are all, the simple appeal to God for deliverance, or the loving description of Krishna as child and man or of the other *avatāras* (incarnations) of Vishnu. In all of them, we see the yearning after divine fellowship. Some of them express the love of mother to child—*Vātsalya bhāva*, which perhaps is the purest form of devotion that man can know.

After the Śaivite Nāyanmār and the Vaishnavite Āḷvār, there was a lull in the output of Tamiḷ compositions as no composer appeared, to take up the thread from where they left it. The next few centuries can be said to be the dark period in the history of Tamiḷ music. Then came Paṭṭinattār "the darling of the city", Villiputtūrār, Tāyumānavar and Aruṇagirinādar. But these are not taken for study hese as the subject of the Seminar is Ancient Tamiḷ music only.

There are those who believe that Tamiḷ music is an offshoot of the music practised outside the Tamiḷ country. Others think that Tamiḷ music is the mother of the other system. This does not seem to be correct to me, as I feel that both systems developed and grew side by side, with the same principles but different terminology. As we have seen earlier, there are equivalent terms in Tamiḷ music for all the Sanskrit technical terms. But it can be said that there was contact between them and naturally they borrowed ideas and terms suitable to their system. The fact that Hēmanāthan, the Northern musician came down to the South to challenge the musicians there to compete with his singing shows that the South was not completely cut off from the North. (விறகு விற்ற படலம்—திருவிளையாடல் புராணம்). We find Sanskrit names of rāgas in Tamiḷ music such as Pañçamam, Gāndhāram,

Gāndhārapañçamam. The term 'rāga' also is found, though puṇ stands for rāga in Tamiḻ music. Nāṭa is mentioned as Naṭṭa-rāgam and not as Naṭṭapuṇ or merely as Nāṭṭa. So also we have Takkarāgam and Paḷantakkarāgam. Sarṅgadēva mentions the types of rāgas called Tēvāravardhani, showing that the *Tēvāras* were well known during his time and that the songs sung in Tamiḻnāḍu were *Tēvāras*. So the people practising the two systems were not averse to borrowing from each other, what was useful and suitable for the enrichment of their music.

Though Tamiḻ music had developed far beyond the elementary stage, it could not grow into an art, with emphasis on the musical aspect, as its importance lay in its religious character. The *Tēvāram* hymns were sung by the authors during moments of deep spiritual experience and hence the music or dhātu was very simple and easily singable conforming to the principles of puṇ and tāḷa. The hymns come from the composers as a continuous dhātnmātu stream. They did not have a set musical form, as in the kirtans and kritis of later times. They did not have aṅgas like pallavi, anupallavi and charaṇa, or at least pallavi and charaṇas. The *Tēvāram* hymns and other songs of the time consisted of many verses set to the same dhātu and as such they could not be sung in concerts, nor do they lend themselves to the singing a niraval and Kalpana svaras. A concert of purely *Tēvāram* hymns or other Tamiḻ compositions of early times is not feasible.

The same was the fact of Vēdic music, which also stayed within the temples as, here also music was of very little importance and was merely a vehicle to intone the verses. It belonged to the sphere of pure sacred music and as such could be used only for worship and for singing the praises of God. When Dēsi music emerged, with all its entrancing features, Vēdic music was forced to the back ground and found sanctuary in temples and other religious institutions. The *Tēvāram* and other forms of Tamiḻ music suffered the same fate and took refuge in temples and with the Ōduvārs, who preserved their purity and sanctity.

By the ninth or tenth centuries Tamiḻ music with its *Tēvāram* and other compositions, which gave more prominence to the words had to recede to the back ground and give place the more artistic forms which were being developed. Of course true to the saying "ஏழிசையாய் இசைப்பயனாய்" the *Tēvāram* hymns had music set to the seven notes, but they did not have the lyrical sweetness and the elaborate music of later times. The many verses were sung to the same dhatu, but this did not tend to make them tedious as the emphasis was on the meaning conveyed by the words. This had to be so because, they were primarily meant to speak to the common man and to help him to worship God, without being disturbed or distracted by elaborate music with saṅgatis and difficult sañcharas and gamakas which could not be sung by the common man.

In the *Tēvāram* hymns we come across fully fledged bhaṣaṅga rāgas like Kausikam (Bhairavi), Takkēsi (Kambhoji), Mēgarāga-kuriñji (Nīlāmbari) and Vyāḷakuriñji (Saurāṣtram). Though Mataṅga mentions Suddha, Cāyalaga and Saṅkirna rāgas, which later led to the development of the Rāgāṅga, Upāṅga and Bhāṣaṅga rāgas, yet, it is in the music of the *Tēvāram* hymns that we find bhaṣaṅga rāgas practically used. Sāraṅgadēva who lived in the 13th century, in the North and wrote the *Saṅgīta-ratnākara*, a Sanskrit work dealing with the music of his time, refers to some of these puṇs in the songs of the Tēvārakāras as Tēvāravardhani. This name he gives to bhaṣaṅga rāgas. Hence the origin of bhāṣaṅga rāgas may be traced back to the heyday of Tamiḻ music. There are *Tēvārams* in nishadāntya and pañcā-mantya rāgas like Nādanāmakriya and Navarōz also.

The development of lyrical music, with emphasis on the musical aspect, can be traced from the advent of the ashtapadis set to rāgas and tālas. Even though they consisted of eight verses alone, sung to the same dhātu, yet a part of the first verse was sung usually as a sort of pallavi or refrain, thus returning after each verse to this. The ashtapadis are dvidhātu prabandhas and the singing of this refrain after every verse,

made the composition more attractive and complete. The full development of lyrical music can be first seen in the Sankīrtans of the Tallapākam composers, in which we find fully fledged kīrtanas with the divisions pallavi, anupallavi and charaṇa, thus giving them variety and perfection of form. Tyāgarāja's compositions also are devotional, prayers to and praises of God, but his approach was through nāda, music, because he was a nādōpāsaka, Hence he visualised God as music and expressed his thoughts and feelings through music. So when the compositions of the Trinity and their contemporaries and successors flooded the country, and manōdharma saṅgīta was developed in all its varied aspects, Vēdic music and Tamiḻ compositions like the *Tēvāram* found refuge in temples, where they are even now preserved in their original form by the priests and the Ōduvārs.

The disuse of the Yāḻ also may be attributed to the coming of more sophisticated instruments like the Vīṇa with frets and the phenomenal development of rāgas with their exquisite and varied gamakas, which could not be produced on an instrument without frets. The incident relating to Tirujñānasambandar and Tiruneela-Kaṇṭa Yaḻpaṇar illustrates this fact very well. Tiruneelakaṇṭa Yaḻpaṇār had a great devotion to the child prodigy and used to accompany him on the yāḻ, which he was an expert in playing. One day when a padikam 'மாதர் மடப்பிடி' in Mēgarāgakuriñji our modern Nilāmbari was sung, he found that he could not reproduce the song exactly as it was sung, due to the peculiar manner in which the note 'ma' was sung at different times, as the strings were merely plucked and could not be manipulated in anyway to produce these gamakas. In his disappointment, he was on the point of breaking the yāḻ, when Tirujñānasambandar stopped him saying that it was not possible for the yāḻ to produce all the music (puṇs) which were created by the Almighty, thus convincing the Yāḻpāṇar that the instruments had its own limitations. This illustrated the fact that neither the yāḻ nor the harp, Vīna which was a similar Vādya, could produce music with all its gamakas and subtle nuances. Naturally these two instruments fell out of use giving place to the fretted Vīna capable of producing every kind of music.

Thiru V. Balakrishnan, (Lecturer in Musicology, Tamiḻ Nāḍu Government College of Karnatic Music, Madras).

There is evidence in ancient musical classics of India that there were two main divisions viz. *Mārgam* and *Dēsiyam*. *Mārgam* generally refers to *shadja grāmam*, the *svara* of which is found in *Sāma Vēda Gānam* (modern *Karaharapirya*). *Dēsiyam* refers to popular tunes, developed and cherished by the people and sung by musicians and scholars. Tamiḻ music was the best in *Dēsiyam* which displayed and displays good artistry and attribute. This has been very well explained in various ways in *Silappadikāram*. The most exemplifying feature of this is that even to this day the Tamiḻ Puṇs as in the music of *Tēvāram* continues the same without change.

This musical methods of Tamiḻ Nāḍu which embraced both Dance and Puṇs though later called by the Sanskritic term Rāgas and underwent many changes, still continues to be sung to the great liking of the Tamiḻs.

As there were contradictions in explaining the various *lakṣhanas* of the Rāgas in Sanskritic music literature, the 72 *Mēlakartha* classification of Veṅkatamakhi has been brought into practice. But there are no differences of opinion so far as the Puṇs of Tamiḻ music is concerned. The music of the South is called Karnātic music as after the suppression of Vijayanagar by the Moghuls, Purandaradāsa who sang various songs in Kannaḍa at various places belonging to Karnātaka. But there is no evidence to prove that the title of *Pitha Maha* of Karnātic Music was conferred on him by the then experts or patrons of the music. This title should have been conferred on him by later day Vidvāns on account of his being a great man.

Some people contend that in the music of the *Yāḻ Gamakas* and subtle *Srutis* cannot be played and, that only after the advent of the *Veena Gamakas* they came into use. This is incorrect because with a wooden chip in the hand, doing *Grahabhēdas* and playing new Rāgas proper *svaras* could be evoked beautifully. Yāḻ disappeared from use as the voice has to be cultured to each of

its strings and when great men like Thirujñānasambanda sang, the player of the accompanying Yāḷ has to adjust the *sruti* of its various strings as, for each Puṇ there are variations in *Svarasthānas* and intricacies in *Sruti.* In those days Yāḷs existed only for certain prescribed Puṇs and great men should have sung in myriads of Puṇs and for such a big number, it is impossible to manufacture Yāḷs. Hence with the incident relating to his singing *Yāḷ Mūrippuṇ* (when his Puṇ could not be played on the Yāḷ) we need not rush to the conclusion that Yāḷ is not capable of playing intricacies in music; because, our forefathers were fully acquainted with such intricacies (alagus).

After the fall of Vijayanagar kingdom, our musicians were taken to Persia (where apparently musical systems do not appear to have existed) and there made to evolve the Hindustāni musical system by the Moghul dynasty. So it is not an exaggeration to say that Hindustani music is not a system imported from Persia but evolved out of the genius of Dravidian culture.

So, we should now wholeheartedly research into the old Dravidian Puṇs. We need not discord the Rāgas now in use but they can be improved by the beautiful Puṇs. We should renew the music of the Yāḷ.

Rāja Sairīndra Mohan Tāgore in his 'Universal history of music' observes: "The mere recurrence of sounds at regular intervals does not represent all the properties of Musical sound. Accent is necessary to add beauty and grace to the time such as rhythm and ear will approve. The ear takes no pleasure in listening to a series of monotonous sounds. It tires and grows weary with the uniformity. The different degrees of loud and soft constitute one of its greatest pleasures. An accented sound invariably deprives the following one of its energy for after the weight of the voice has been thrown upon the accented note, the next one is uttered under some degree of exhaustion and is rendered weaker in consequence."

It does not appear that there is any reference to the greatness of vocal and instrumental music of Āryan culture. Saraśvathi liked Veena, Krishna Paramātma, the flute, Nandikēśvara, the Mri-

daṅgam, Natarāja, the Dance and, Śiva, the Sāma Vēda. But who liked vocal music? The wonderful creations of vocal music should have been made only by Tamiḻian music which grew to a surprising extent from the time of Sambandar.

I do not say that singing should be only in Tamiḻ. But in singing the meaning should be joined to the beauty of the voice. Kannaḍa, Malayāḷam, Telugu are all Dravidian languages. But in singing, the meaning of the song should come out clearly to be understood by all. *Rāga Bhāva* should be united with *Sāhitya Bhāva.* But mostly we do not pay attention to *Sāhitya Bhāva.* To rectify this bad situation in Tamiḻ Nāḍu, only Tamiḻ songs should be sung and then, and only then, when we turn attention to songs in other languages shall we realise that we will get pitiable feeling that without understanding the meaning, we are singing. When once we get this feeling the reformation will be automatic. "For one without voice the finger (serves) (குரலில்லாதவனுக்கு விரல்). The first word pronounced vocally is *Amma* (mother) and hence what else can please God than this first word affectionately pronounced by a child to its mother. So there is no other way to make our country's life divine, than following this way of vocal development in music. Vocal Music should be learnt perfectly so as to sing to audiences with sweetness, with pure *srutis* to enable the audience to appreciate it fully. All mental concepts and creations inconsistent with the meaning of the song should be eschewed. *Silappadikāram* gives ample evidence to illustrate these truths (1) Araṅgētram (Debut) was made only after the abilities were tested by Vocal singing, then with Yāḻ, then with drum, then with flute and only after all these tests a girl was allowed to make debut. (2) Songs inconsistent with the Paṉ and culture, were not allowed to be sung. (3) The drummer should be fully acquainted with the art of Dance and should be able to bring out the niceties of the performance. (4) The flutist should be an expert in the art சித்திரப் புணர்ப்பு and வஞ்சனைப் புணர்ப்பு in playing on it.

Leader's Concluding remarks. One word more regarding the Yāḻ. The incident related above[1] is not the result of the fertile imagination of anyone as mentioned by Mr. Balakrishnan, Lecturer

in Tamiḻnāḍu Araśu Isai Kallūri as we find it related in *Periapurāṇam* of Sekkiḻār where Tirujñānasambandar says[1]

" ஐயர் நீர் யாழ இதனை முரிக்குமதென் ஆளுடையாளுடனே கூடச்
செய் சடையாரளித்த திருவருளின் பெருமை யெல்லாந் தெரிய நம்பால்
எய்திய இக்கருவியினில் அளவுபடுமோ நந்தம் இயல்புக்கேற்ப,
வையகத்தோர் அறிவுற இக்கருவி அளவையின் இடற்றல் வழக்கே"

"Do not break the yāḻ as it is impossible to express this immense gift of Śiva through this instrument in our possession. Hence let us. as far as it lies in our power, play it, in order that the world may benefit through it." What the saint meant was that the beauty of the puṇs could not be exactly played and the shakes produced on it, as it had only plucking technique.

It was also said that a small stick கட்டை or கோணு was used to touch the strings and produce the gamakas. It as an accepted fact that as soon as a vibrating string is touched, the vibrations would stop. True, the pitch of the note may be slightly altered by this method. The strings of the yāḻ were made of gut or strands of particular kind of grass twisted together. When they were tied on the yāḻ and plucked, the vibration would continue for a long time and would not die out before the next string is plucked and thus a confused medley of sound would result. It was to stop the vibrations of the string after the proper duration that the stick or koṇa was used. This gave clarity to the music.

Dr. Alamelu Govindarajan who presided, stated:—The paper on "Ancient Tamiḻ Music" read by Dr. Light Isaac at the Seminar is very interesting and informative. The innumerable references to music—their forms, scales and instruments—in ancient Tamiḻ literature, throw a lot of light on the practice and progress of music during the various periods in Indian history. *Silappadikāram* as we all know, gives us an encyclopaedic knowledge of the music that was in vogue as early as 2nd century A.D. and is recognised as an authentic work of scholarship and knowledge.

1. Sekkiḻār—*Tirujñānasambanda Swami Purāṇam,* V. 451.

The tunes and the melodic structure of the *Tēvāram* hymns belonging to a later period provide more clues for further study on the subject.

India is a vast country and our pride is in a certain continuity of her civilization from the earliest times to the present day. Indian culture owes a lot not only the Vēdas, the epics—*Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata* written in Sanskrit—but to many other early works in other vernaculars as well. It will not be a deviation to say that the Tamiḻ language was the oldest of them all. The information we gather from the *Tolkāppiyam*, the earliest work on Tamiḻ grammar is authoritative. Tamiḻ classics of the Saṅgam periods like the *Paripāḍal*, are a rich mine for research and will help us to compile facts regarding the origin and growth of ancient Indian music.

Archeologists have discovered that some relics of Moheñjodāro and Hārappa—of the Indus valley civilisation—are similar to a few, found from excavations of Arikamēḍu in South India. From all these we note in general, that the indebtedness of Indian culture is as much to Dravidian origins as to the Vēdic. Roman coins found in plenty in South India reveal a trade relationship with Western countries, even earlier than the first century A.D. Hence we cannot rule out the possibility of the import of some musical instruments into India from outside. That the "Zaggal", the Greek harp, is the same as the variety of Yaḻ (Yazh) described in *Silappadikāram* is a general surmise. We have listened to the descriptions of a large variety of "Yaḻ" in this seminar and it will be interesting and useful to study and examine the necessary material to find out if the two words (Zaggal and Yaḻ) refer to the same instrument.

Art can never be stationary and Indian art was no exception. It sprawled all over and spread itself into every nook and corner of the country and while doing so, also managed a region-wise development of its own. That was, perhaps, necessary to stabilise and consolidate itself in every region. Music, the finest of arts also underwent this experience. Very soon each region

could boast of a music of its own mould. But it could never break away from the common heritage. Indian music with spiritual backing is evolved round religious practices and notions, no doubt, but remember, its secular side was never neglected even from its beginnings. It is interesting to follow the Indian musical scale growing out of simple Vēdic chanting of three and four notes. The Grāmagāna and the Āranyagāna have existed side by side. It is equally facinating to study the many punns and thirams of Tamiḻ *isai* stepping out of scales of limited range.

The regional development in Indian music introduced new varieties and increased its stock. Though born of the same notes, and with an emotional impact in common, variant presentations of the art came into existence, depending on the conditions of the place and the tastes of the people concerned. In fact some places became important seats of particular forms of music as art music, folk, music, dance music etc.

Again, a mutual attraction and a certain reciprocal attitude towards one another led to a happy commingling of the art, no matter whether the fusion was from within the country or from outside. Indian music though regarded as somewhat complacent, was never hesitant to draw from other sources to enrich or enhance its own quality but at no time has its original individuality been veiled. A rich variety in its stock is the glory and splendour of Indian music and its contribution to the music of the world like the Indian rāga, is praiseworthy.

Folk music has a vital role in the history of Indian music. A study of the different varieties of it may be recommended to interested scholars for further research. After all, it is from the music of the common man that the art has taken strides towards its classical growth. Even from the early periods in our history, the temples have been not only places of worship, but have served as educational institutions and as recreation ground as well. Here the people gathered, prayed, sang and danced, listened to musical discourses that preached morals, enacted stories that emphasised the power and victory of the good over

the evil. The Tamil language and the South Indian temples are rich store-houses for the study of folk music and to study it in all its pristine glory, will be only adding to the annals of Indian music.

In Indian music, we notice parallel developments in its progress in various parts of the land registered at the same period in history. This simultaneous occurrence of a musical feature raises a doubt, if one region was influenced by the other. We have to admit that there is no super-imposition of the one on the other, but the question, which is the original and which the copy, often poses a point for argument. It would do well for scholars to delve more deeply into the matter, examine the similarities and differences presented during the different periods in the history of music, to help towards further discussion on the subject. It demands intensive study and research.

Indian music is not only the finest of fine arts but a comprehensive one too. It can qualify to be the window of Indian culture in which capacity all the Indian arts mingle and merge to present a wholesome picture.

BOOK REVIEW

Folk songs of South Gujarat by Madhubai Patel—with a foreward by R. C. Mehta, Indian Musicological Society, Bombay and Baroda, 1974, 121 pp.—Price Rs. 25.

In the cultural heritage of a country, folk music, dance and drama have an important place. The characteristic features of the folk songs are simple rhythm and easy melody. The language may not be of high order and the compass of the songs is always limited.

This book is a distinct addition to the studies of Indian folk-lore. It is an eminently scholarly work and the author has not only given theoretical information about the folk songs of Gujarat but also given notation for twenty four songs which will be very helpful for the practical singing of these beautiful folk songs.

Shri Madhubai Patel, the author of this book is well-known throughout India for his enormous collection of folk songs. His present work is a very valuable contribution to the music world. Prof. R. C. Mehta has written a foreward introducing Shri Madhubai Patel and giving a short summary of the contents of the book.

This work consists of Eighteen chapters apart from the Foreward, Preface and, three Appendices, viz. (1) Addenda to Incomplete Texts of songs in staff notation, (2) Index of English text of folk songs and (3) word-list.

In the Introductory chapter, the author gives sociological and historical information about Gujarat, describes the special features of its folk songs and dance, the author's village, houses, castes, occupation of the people, festivals and the varieties of folk songs sung by them.

Then follow the other chapters in which are given the English translation of the folk songs on the themes "craving for a

child", cradle songs, nursery rhymes, 'Khayana' the folk song sung by unmarried girls, love songs, marriage songs, songs of farewell, 'Fatana' or songs of humour, work songs, songs of separation, 'Abavani' or songs of the sea, songs that are used in the folk dances of 'Garba', 'Garbi' [the latter being exclusively performed by men as opposed to that of 'Garba' which is performed by women folk alone] as also the songs sung at the popular and the famous folk dance of Gujarat—the Rasa. The author also has written about the different varieties of 'Rasa' dance and of the 'Gheraiya' which is popular only in South Gujarat, and the 'Goph' which is the May-Pole of Gujarat. Songs of rain, shepherd's songs and the songs used at Tribal dances such as Hali, Dangi, Dholak, Dobrur, Dev—Dobri, Choudhari and Chheliya of Gujarat also finds a place. The book ends with songs of death.

The texts of twenty-four songs of different varieties—cradle song, Khayana, marriage song, brother's love, song of farewell, work song, song of separation, song of the sea, folk dance songs—Garba, Rasa, song of rain, shepherd's song, Tribal dance—songs, song of Death and song of worship are given with Western staff notation.

The author in his preface has stated that "Shri Natvarlal Naik was helpful in writing down in the Indian Solfa system and Shri Vijay Ghosh putting these into staff notation." But in this present work, the Indian Solfa notation is not found. As most of the Indian singers are not able to follow Western staff notation, it will be of great help for the Indian folk-lorists and lovers of folk music, if the songs are also given in Indian solfa notation along with the Western staff notation in a future edition. But so far, nobody has published the folk songs with notations, in India. No doubt this book forms an important contribution to the study of folk songs and folk literature. Folklorists and lovers of folk songs will be undoubtedly indebted to Shri Madhubai Patel for this immortal contribution of his in the field of Folk Songs.

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